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Parish and Catechesis

Divine Life and Christian Community

by Gérard GILLEMAN, S. J.

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« All are to be one, just as you,
Father, are in Me and I am in you. »
(John, 17, 21).

It is from the top of a mountain that one gets the best view of vast expanses of plains with their network of roads and rivers. There one discovers that all things are interconnected.

So too must we ascend very high before we realize that our inmost Christian life — let us call it theological, since it connects us straight with God — has surprisingly vast implications. From there, we shall see that we are bound up with our brothers from every corner of the earth by those very ties which unite us with God, more particularly by our faith, hope and charity, the « theological virtues. »

I. MOST HIGH : AN ETERNAL COMMUNITY

Let us go back to when the world was not yet launched on its countless rounds of millenia. Nothing has been created as yet ; not even a speck of dust. God alone is. And yet, there is nothing like a dead silence. For ever, the Father says the Word ; a living Word who expresses adequately what he is. In Him, he recognizes himself as in his perfect image (Col. 1, 15). Here is a tremendous pouring forth of life in a divine stillness. Whatever he possesses — the divine substance and its infinite love — the Father wholly surrenders to his Son. And the Son accepts it with an integral thankfulness. Between « the Two » springs up such an intense and living love, that it is a person : the personified love of Father and Son. He too shares boundlessly in the divine riches. « God is charity because the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one. »²

1. See biographical notice in *Lumen Vitae*, IX (1954), p. 556. — Address : St. Mary's College, Kurseong, N.E.Ry., INDIA (Editor's note).

2. SAINT AUGUSTINE, *In Epist. Jo.*, Tr. 10, 5 ; P.L., 35, 2057.

Of this community of the Holy Trinity, there is no beginning. What astronomical yardstick can fathom the height and depth of this immensity of love?

In this excessive love, the three Persons freely decide to introduce other persons into the inner-circuit of their triune life, so that these others, though not being God, may yet one day drink from that stream of life and see God face to face.

And so, created in the image of God (Gen. 1, 27), these persons are destined to imitate, in their own humble way, the community of love of the Trinity, where each one of the divine Persons gives Himself wholly to the other two; where the very personality of each Person consists in being totally «for the others.» — At the level of a human community, spirit is enmeshed in matter. And we know how matter divides and scatters more than it ever unites. — For that task, therefore, the divine Persons choose «man.»¹ Not a mere procession of individuals, but an immense organism, the human tree, which has branched down to us from Adam. But a worm cankered the root and the stock became hollow. However, the one who could «head» mankind again was foreseen and already promised from the outset. When the times were ripe, the Son Himself became «Man», the true Adam. *Ecce Homo*.

Yes, He became «a man» among us. But in view of that descent of a divine Person on that precise spot of the vast human tree, the whole tree was «re-capitated,» so to say, and could receive afresh the sap of divine life. All the sons of Adam who have accepted or will accept to be grafted into the God-man make up with Him one living organism: they are branches of the true vine (John 15, 5), or members of a mysterious body (1 Cor. 12, 27). It is for that total Christ, head and members, stock and branches, that the universe was devised from the very beginning of its long evolution. Down to the remotest star, the material cosmos itself is nothing but the fringe of His garment.

If such is the reality, then the divine plan of creating, here on earth, a community of love, seems less exorbitant. In our own bodies, we see that our hands and our eyes are ever ready to dedicate themselves to our persons, and that, therefore, they ceaselessly help one another. They belong to us much more than they do to themselves. And that propensity to service and devotedness is ingrained in their very texture. They are made for it. Each member

1. Besides the angels, of whom we do not speak here; but they too are, we may say, created in view of Christ and of His Mystical Body.

has a definite appointment and that appointment is not interchangeable.

As Christians, we belong more to the total Christ than to ourselves taken individually. We are members of the Person of Christ, and, therefore, the grace given us and the accompanying theological virtues are, by their very nature, « memberly. » They urge us to surrender ourselves to God and to others, and this surrender is at the root of our Christian personality as members of the body of Christ, just as this surrender of Self is constitutive of divine personality in the Holy Trinity. A particular appointment, therefore, and a personal vocation are designed for each of us ; that means, we have a function towards all the others.

It is worth examining, then, how the theological virtues in particular are instruments of this communion, how they fit us to communicate with our human brothers and to live in this communion of love — the visible Church. At once, it will be clear that this their social character does not in the least prevent them from being « theological » in the fullest sense of the word, i.e. from uniting us directly with the Trinity. Nor does this character prevent them from being most personal, i.e. from mobilizing in us what makes us least gregarious, namely the inmost riches of our spiritual and free endeavour. The stress ought to be laid at the same time on both these aspects — the theologico-personal and the social one — lest we take up a false attitude which would maim our Christian life and render it dangerous or morbid.

II. OUR CATHOLIC FAITH¹

Can we think of a more intimate and personal commitment than the act by which an adult convert makes his profession of faith ? He seeks God. Yet, he finds him only in the Church. Already for Saint Paul, to accept faith is to receive Baptism. And Jesus said : « he who believes and is baptized will be saved » (Mark 16, 16).

Indeed, since Christ has come, one normally cannot approach God any more but through the Church. Why is it so ? Because God himself has « drawn near » in Jesus Christ : « Nobody can come to the Father, except through Me » (John 14, 6). Jesus is « God with us, » Emmanuel (Matth. 1, 23).

1. Here we take our inspiration from the article of M. FRAEYMAN, « Het kerkelijk sociaal aspect van het geloof, » in *Collationes Brug. en Gandav.*, 3 (1957), pp. 23-38. Cfr R. GUARDINI, *Vie de la foi*, Paris, 1951.

He is the way to God (John 14, 6). Now, the Church is Jesus Christ continued and entire, « His body, the Church » (Col. 1, 24).

The sacraments are His own actions, holding from His power their efficacy. We might say they are His standing gestures of welcome, but embodied and « institutionalized » in the human gestures and words of His body the Church. Thus, for example, Baptism is God's welcoming gesture in Christ towards those who are not yet members of His body. When incorporated into the Church, it is God Himself that they meet by their vital union with Christ. Through the Son, they enter the inner circuit of triune life. Thus, too, the sacrament of Penance is the eternal gesture of God who, in Christ, graciously receives again, by the words of the Church, those members of Christ who needed forgiveness in order to be inserted once more as a vital member of Christ and of His visible body, the Church.¹ « Whatever you will loose on earth will be loosed in heaven » (Matth. 16, 19). Jesus Himself said that we must needs eat His body and drink His blood (John 6, 53-55) in the Ecclesial banquet, if we want to keep alive.

The fact of being incorporated into the Church is perhaps even more striking in the case of a little baby being baptized : « What do you ask from the Church ? — Faith. » The little one is himself incapable of answering ; and yet, he is endowed with a new divine life by the sacrament, as soon as he is incorporated into the Church's life. He receives all through her. It is through the Church and her sacramental organism that we have received the supernatural entity of our « life of faith, » namely the theological virtue, which was a reality within us — new eyes of the soul together with a divine energy — even before we could have received the formulation of our faith. It has given our intelligence the immediate contact with God. Faith is thus social and theological !

Besides, we must think of all that the Church as a society furnishes our faith with. She gives it the whole of its explicit content. For the revelation of Christ has come down to us through her channel and we owe to the hierarchic and infallible teaching of her *magisterium* the safe and authentic possession of our Catholic truth. Catholic dogma, chiselled, so to say, and defined with such

1. We speak of the case of the remission of mortal sins. In case of venial sins only, that same circulation of life is increased. — We cannot here consider in details the problem of those who are justified without visibly belonging to the Church. Even they do not approach God but in Christ, even if they are not, here on earth, explicitly conscious of their belonging to Him. They too are thus saved through the Church, to whom they belong 'in-voto.'

a wonderful accuracy, is the social faith of the Church. When we profess it, the faith of the Church lives on in us ; we bear witness to it. Holy Scripture itself cannot be safely and fully understood but in the Church who is entrusted with the unfolding of the sacred deposit.

The Church wants that our faith be publicly manifested. The sacramental celebration of the Christian liturgy and cult, the common prayer are an open profession which is necessary to our life of faith. While living through the liturgical year, or participating in the prayer of the parish, or listening to the teaching of the vicar, our faith moulds itself on the living teaching : *lex orandi, lex credendi*, the norm of the prayer of the Church is also the norm of her faith. Besides, the fervour of our faith is fanned and stirred up by the fervour of the best members of the community. How great is the role of Saints in the transmission of faith ! Religious life, too, as an institution, represents in the Church, the perfect Christian life ;¹ God knows how many remained loyal to their faith thanks to a humble Little Sister of the poor or a hidden carmelite nun who, by the simple fact of her life totally sacrificed, made them realize that Christian faith consists in dedicating one's life to God and to others.

As a complementary proof of this, let us imagine an average Christian who is forced to live without the Catholic atmosphere and without the examples of living faith, surrounded as he is with the total indifference of atheists and unaided by the liturgy, the sacraments or the instruction of the Church. Is it pessimistic to say that his faith runs an extreme risk because it is not supported by the community, unless he take heroic measures ?

But, then, we must be consistent with ourselves. What we receive from the members of the community, the others have a right to expect it from us, in the full measure of our membership. Not to live our faith or to omit to profess it in a fervent sacramental life, does not only debilitate us, but, further makes us fall short of our duty of bearing witness. We fail to back the faith of the others as we ought to do on account of our place in the Church. There is injustice and selfishness in this attitude, when we have received so much from the others.

But the Church must continually grow and lead our non-Christian brethren to the only Shepherd (John 10, 16). My faith, then, is necessarily connected with some apostolic task. I have to share it.

1. See a fundamental book on the question : R. CARPENTIER, S.J., *Life in the City of God*, New York, Benziger Brs, 1959.

If the unbelievers notice that my faith is feeble and languishing, or if I cannot « give an account » for it, I have not done my duty as a believer. The passing on of Christian light in the world depends on those who hold today the lighted torch and on the way they succeed to set the world ablaze (Luke 12, 49). Our experience tells us, alas, that another « incendiary » is at work.

Such a social responsibility shows how important is the corporate practice of our faith. But this social aspect itself would prove suspect and inefficient if our faith did not at the same time strike deep roots in a really personal conviction and practice ; if it were not able to draw on all the resources of initiative and on a doctrine solidly possessed ; or if it were not founded on a genuine interior life. For faith is, first of all, the personal hold of God and of His testimony in the depth of our hearts and minds. We cannot however develop this important aspect in the present pages.

III. HOPE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Many a thing said of faith hold good in an analogous way for hope and charity. We may, therefore, be shorter and only stress one or another more specific aspect of these two virtues, so as to show that they too must feed on the corporate Catholic life.

Hope is a theological virtue, a divine reality stirred up in our inmost being by the immediate presence of God who raises our soul, draws it to Himself and gives it the personal pledge that His promises with regard to it will be carried out in it ; that it will attain God by the very strength of God, provided it loyally looks to Him for all, rather than rely on itself ; nay expects from God this very perseverance.

But this promise of God reaches down to us today because it has been passed on by a whole people. Abraham and the chosen people were for centuries its trustees. « That hope, I have received it. Israel has given me Jesus. No one can say : ‘ I hope for grace in this world and for eternal glory in the other,’ without being dependant upon those who have been hoping before him. Though it is a gratuitous gift of God to every baptized person, the content of hope is inseparable from the previous gifts granted by God to a people. If hope is allowed to me, I owe it no doubt to the mercy of God which caused the Incarnation of Jesus Christ to take place ; but also to the people in which I am rooted by my Christian faith. » ¹

1. A.-M. CARRÉ, O.P., *Espérance et désespoir*, Paris, 1953, p. 62.

The real heir of Israel and of his promises is the Church and her faithful, to whom the legacy has officially been handed over : « Repent, Peter said to them, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to have your sins forgiven ; then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and for your children, and for all those, however far away, whom the Lord our God calls to himself » (Acts 2, 38 f.).

The collective hope of the Church is infallible ; she has « the words of eternal life » (John 6, 69) and « the gates of hell shall not prevail against it » (Matth. 16, 18). She is promised glory and she possesses every means of grace which she distributes through her sacraments and through the word of God. The Church has the promise that she shall grow like the mustard-seed, until she becomes the great human tree destined to cover all nations (cf. Mark 4, 32) and to carry them up to God. Hope is the virtue of the growth of the Mystical Body and of every Christian.¹ « That organism is 'the hoping,' the one who hopes absolutely ; who hopes on account of his very structure, we might say. For, to his members, who are earthly and human, that organism communicates a heavenly and divine life ; a life, therefore, which is steamed up, as it were, under the pressure of its greatness, straining to recover its vast expanse. And thus deep in the life of its members, there is an upsetting of the equilibrium, an upward urge towards heaven. What else does it mean than they live on hope : *spe enim salvi facti sumus*, 'our salvation is only a matter of hope' (Rom. 8, 24). Let us look more closely at this organism. Through Christ, its head and its all in all, it finds itself full in glory ; through its members it is still amidst trials ; and yet, it is one and the same. The structure that it gets from being in Christ inserts in the inmost being of its members a call, an uplifting, an aspiration towards what they already are, but only in Christ ; and which, in themselves, is as an anticipation, a desire, a need, in other words, as a hope. »²

Such is the real outlook on our Catholic hope : as members we share in the hope of the Church ; we hope for ourselves, no doubt, the total eternal life of body and soul and the graces needed to reach up there. But we may include in our hopeful expectation the salvation of the world at large, the glorious coming back of Christ and the renewing of the universe on the hour of the resurrection of the bodies.³ Our hope is a cosmic one. It happens at times that

1. Cfr E. MERSCH, S.J., *Morale et Corps Mystique*, vol. 2, 1949, chap. 4 & 5.

2. E. MERSCH, S.J., *op. cit.*, p. 103.

3. Cfr R. HASSEVELT, « L'espérance de l'Eglise », in *Masses ouvrières*, n° 46, July 1949, pp. 5-32

our brethren who have been led astray into atheistic communism take us to task for indulging in selfishness and individualism when we limit our hope to our own personal happiness, without care for the human community. But for one who has understood Catholic hope, it is the 'grand soir' of the marxists which looks dim and actually « hopeless ; » for it promises only a « heaven on earth, » that means either utopia or hell.

On the contrary, besides the possession of God Himself as its supreme goal by the whole Mystical Body, our Catholic hope contains a determination to progressively fashion this humble land of men, the world of science and labour, and to make it ready for the day of its last transformation, that it may not offer itself « in an infantile and larval condition to be clasped by the Spirit ; »¹ and also that it may remove all those inequalities and injustices which are the enemies of theological charity.

We actually thirst for that hope which God infuses in us through the Church. Were we left to ourselves, we should be tempted to fear and discouragement, like Peter walking on the sea. We are so aware of being weak. As though our strength were not God's strength in our own weakness (2 Cor. 12, 9). We need all the more a fraternal support. Its corporate aspect lends such strength and brotherly charm to our hope : it is at once the joy of striving all together to the same goal ; of talking about it as pilgrims do on the long route, when they spur one another to walk cheerfully ; or as the members of an expeditionary force who keep alive among themselves the « homesickness » for their country. We too are citizens of another city (Hebr. 13, 14). *Spe gaudentes*.

IV. ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL : CHARITY

That charity should be lived within the community seems to be obvious. Is it not precisely the « virtue of communion » between persons ? Our present task is rather to show that it is the *theological* virtue of charity which gathers together and animates the community of *men* with « one heart and one soul » (Acts 4, 32).

How can we love our human brethren with a love which comes down straight from God into our heart, and, from there, returns straight up to God ; in other words, with a theological love ?

Jesus answers : « I tell you the plain truth, inasmuch as you did this to one of these least brethren of mine, you did it to me »

1. Y. CONGAR, O.P., « Pour une recherche du laïcat », in *Etudes*, Febr. 1948, p. 216, quoted by CARRÉ, *op. cit.*

(Matth. 25, 40). « I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting » (Acts 9, 5) when you persecute Christians. « He who does not love his brother whom he sees, cannot love God whom he does not see. Besides, we have received this commandment from God : He who loves God must love his brother also. » (1 John 4, 20 f.).

These divine words imply that the neighbour is possessed of a divine loveliness which can be loved with the very love which goes up to God. For, « in Christ... men are inseparable from God. »¹

As members of Christ, we said, we belong to Him even more than to ourselves. We are something of Him. We exist « in, and by an organism which, in Christ, ultimately subsists in God alone. »²

While loving the members, then, our charity goes up first to Christ Himself. Which does not mean, however, that the former be not really loved. Since we love them as members, they are loved in Christ, but they are loved themselves, because they are really in Christ. « If God is more in the Christians than they are in themselves, they too must be loved if He is to be loved ; and they must be loved by that very love which loves God... Christ is one with the Christians ; hence the result is that the loveliness itself of God is their most personal and precious possession. Henceforth, in order to love the whole of God, we must need love the God-man ; so also, in order to love the whole of the God-man, we must love the members of this God-man. Since God himself, in Christ, has pervaded the whole of mankind till its very end, it is imperative that, in Christ, our charity does not reach less far, lest we disown Him. »³ The neighbour is, somehow, Christ made visible to us, today.

All this seems by far too wonderful. Nay, it would mean blasphemy, had not the Holy Trinity, in Jesus Christ, condescended to come down and meet us in the mud of which we are made. True, the mud reappears all too often. This renders humble our divine charity. Fool would be the beggar taking pride in the alms he is given. Responsibility rather than pride should be the stimulus of our grateful love.

In such perspectives, what should be the movement of our charity ? We shall return it whole and entire to its divine source, no doubt, since it is a theological love. But we shall carry along in it all those who are « of God » and of Christ, all His actual members and also those who are called by Christ to become His

1. E. MERSCH, S.J., *op. cit.*, p. 141.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

members. St. Thomas remarks with deep insight upon this : « Charity loves somehow God in all neighbours. For, by charity, the neighbour is loved precisely either because God is in him, or in order that God be in him. »¹

This gives the foundation and the measure of our apostolate towards Christians and non-Christians.

The *foundation*, because whatever we shall be able to carry out can and should be a variegated manifestation, in the most various fields, of the deep love of charity which makes up the profound inspiration of our whole life. Be it prayer, social action, duties of our state ; education or religious life, missionary or familial life ; all that could be the many facets of the one love of all persons and things in Christ.

That gives also the *measure* of our apostolate. Like fire, love never say, « Enough, no more. » The limit will be none else than our available possibilities. But love multiplies these possibilities almost indefinitely. Love spares no effort.

Charity is the gift of self with a view of creating a communion between persons, divine or human, in Christ. When we give ourselves to others, we give them Christ, and the gift returns to Christ. And, in Christ it rises to the Father, in the Spirit. Such a gift does not impoverish the giver, since he is a member of the « communion » thus created. Only, now we do not possess ourself any more as a separate individual, or as a self-contained « ego. » The entire riches are possessed by the « we » of all our brothers. It is similar to the triune communion.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, it is *charity* which best manifests that our Christian society, kindled by the *Spirit*, is a humble but confident attempt at reproducing, on the human plane, the community of the Holy Trinity. But without *faith*, how could we learn from the *Son* the basic secret of God : « God is charity » (1 John 4, 8 & 16) ? And without *hope*, how could we expect from the *Father* the strength which enables us to try that divine adventure and to get up again and again after every failure ?

For all this, the three virtues are theological and connected with the Holy Trinity. At the same time, they cannot be properly « lived » except in the community of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, which is the Church.

1. *Quaest. disp. de caritate, q. unica, a. 4, c.*

The Parish in the Teaching of Catechism?

by Father DOMENICO GRASSO, S. J.

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The problem under consideration in the present article is the community aspect of Catechesis. Does this imply creating a consciousness of belonging to the Church at large, or to the Church through membership of a Parish? If this be the case, catechists and teachers of Religion should strive to bring home to their children not only an awareness of their membership of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, but also that of forming part of a well-defined community, the parish community of the place in which they live. Would not the very teaching of Religion demand this, aiming as it does, at the formation of the «total Christian» who realizes that it is only through membership of a parish that he can attain to the full community life of the Church.

The point here is not one of mere facts. It is taken for granted that the faithful are «parish-minded.» No one will deny that. We are stating a question of principle. Does Catechesis demand that we make the Christian realize the vital part he is called upon to play as member of the parish community, complementary though it be to his duty to the Church at large? The problem is very real because the life of the Church cannot be lived in a single

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community. It has to be split up into local communities, not only because of the hierarchical constitution of the Church, but also by the very nature of its community life, created and developed as it is, by preaching the Word of God, administering the Sacraments, and particularly by the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

I. THE THEOLOGY OF THE PARISH

The answer to our question is not to be considered apart from our conception of the nature of a parish.

Since 1925, the parochial institution, especially in Germany, has given theologians food for reflection, with a view to determine the nature and function of the Christian life. Conclusions are now sufficiently clear.

According to some theologians — mainly liturgists — the parish is a Church in miniature, « an image of the Universal Church, »¹ « a spiritual reality, »² an auto-realization and a self realization of the Church, a daughter-Church of the Mother-Church, an « Ecclesiola, » a tangible manifestation, to us and in us, of the plenitude of Christ.³ Consequently, it is a « mystery, » because it is the place where the mystery of the Church is made visible to the faithful in a concrete and intelligible way. These expressions make of the parish « God's Holy Family, » an « organic cell of the Mystical Body of Christ, containing the life of the whole Christ and the whole Church. »⁴ This opinion rests on the function attributed to the parish-priest in Canon Law,⁵ in particular to his duty of celebrating Mass for the people. It is in the Eucharistic Sacrifice that the parish-priest represents, with his community of the faithful, one sole offering in Christ.

This essentially spiritual conception of the parish makes of it a « sui generis » organism, essentially supernatural, the nature of which is the object of theological study and also, in a subsidiary way, of Canon Law, and religious Sociology.

On the other hand, another theory, held chiefly by Canonists, sees in the parish, an institution created by the Church solely for the spiritual necessities of the faithful. It maintains a distinct attitude of reserve on the definition of « Ecclesiola in Ecclesia, » because

1. A. WINTERSIG, in *The House of God*, Nr 8, p. 16.

2. J. PINSK, in *Liturgical and Parochial Questions*, 18 (1933), p. 202.

3. M. SCHURR, in *Benediktinische Monatschrift*, 19 (1937), pp. 89-90.

4. M. SCHURR, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

5. C.J.C., can. 462.

this definition obscures the distinction between the parish — which is an ecclesiastical institution — and the diocese — which is a divine institution. Moreover, the parish is not a juridical community, but simply a community in the wide sense of the word, by virtue of the relationship created spontaneously among people living in the same area and sharing in the same life.¹ These opinions tend respectively to give greater or lesser importance to the parish in the life of the Christian. To those who see in the parish a spiritual organism, where the life of the Church is realized and made visible, it is the normal place for the Christian to live his spiritual life. From the very fact that he resides in a certain parish, the Christian belongs to it and is under the authority of the parish-priest, who, alone, is responsible for his parishioner's spiritual life. In this case, the parish monopolizes the life of the Christian living within its boundaries. The latter cannot possibly disinterest himself from it or break away from it by giving his name to other institutions. Alternatively, those who uphold the second opinion see in the parish nothing more than an institution created by the Church for the care of souls. Though the Christian can be invited to share in its life, he must in no way be forced to do so, say the upholders of this opinion. Only one thing matters, the spiritual advancement of the faithful, which can be brought about wherever the Church exists, that is to say, wherever the Word of God is preached, wherever the life of grace is dispensed by the Sacraments and above all by the Mass, whether in the parish or elsewhere.

Neither of these two opinions goes so far in its conclusions as to assert or deny explicitly the importance of the place to be attributed to the parish in the Teaching of Religion. Strictly speaking, the first opinion upholds this view. If the Christian cannot live his supernatural life outside the limits of his parish, if his parish-priest alone is despondible for him before God, then Catechesis must aim at forming a faithful who is « parish-minded. » According to the second opinion, this outlook does not exist. For the Christian, to be « parish-minded » or « Church-minded » is one and the same thing.

1. This idea can be found in the article by O. NEIL v. BREUNING, *Pfarrgemeinde, Pfarrfamilie, Pfarrprinzip*, in *Trier. Theol. Zeitschrift*, 56 (1947), 4, spec. p. 258.

II. PARISH AND DIOCESE

To judge between the two opinions above mentioned, it is first of all necessary to admit that there is some truth in both. It is impossible to consider the parish as a purely administrative organism. If it is « *pars dioceseos*, » (a part of the diocese,) according to the definition of Canon Law, it shares necessarily in the properties of the diocese and of the Universal Church. According to St. Paul, the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, an idea which can be applied equally to local churches, diocesan churches or to the Cathedral Church.¹

Therefore, if the parish is part of the diocese, i.e. of the « Cathedral » church, it necessarily has a share in the mystical and supernatural qualities of the latter. The part participates in the nature of the whole. On the other hand, it is in the parish that the Church is made tangible, there that the Christian comes into contact with her. It is in the parish that the mystery of Salvation is proclaimed, and that the Christian pays his public debt of homage to God. The aim of the Church, which is to communicate to the faithful the life of grace, is normally realized through the ministry of her priests, above all by her parish-priests. Again, it is through the parish that the Christian is integrated by Baptism, into the Mystical Body of Christ.

But when all this has been said, it must be acknowledged that the parish shares to a certain extent in the nature of a community. If, according to St. Paul, all those who drink the Lord's cup are made one body,² it follows that the faithful centred around the Eucharist together with their pastor, form, as it were, a unity and a community. In the same way, the distribution of grace through preaching and dispensing of the Sacraments by the parish-priest, cannot fail to establish between him and his parishioners, links of spiritual relationship, recognized by Canon law itself.³

Although these arguments make it possible to go beyond a purely juridical conception of a parish, they are not sufficiently conclusive to justify either a true theology of the parish, or the conclusions drawn from it, because the mystical and supernatural properties come to the parish from its relationship with the diocese and the Universal Church. The juridical thesis is right in maintaining that the parish as such, is the responsibility, not of theology, but of

1. *I Cor.*, X, 17.

2. *I Cor.*, X, 17; *Rom.*, XII, 5.

3. Can. 768 and 1079.

Canon Law, because the parish as such, was not created by Christ, but by ecclesiastical legislation. Historically speaking, the parish institution derives from the needs of the pastoral ministry, when the increase of the episcopal community, (the only one required in the hierarchical constitution of the Church and the only one to exist for three centuries) obliged bishops at the head of vast dioceses, to found, outside the boundaries of the Episcopal See, various centres of worship where the faithful could participate in the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries. (In Rome, those places were called « tituli »). As Christianity developed in the countryside, the bishops were obliged to appoint resident-priests to provide for the spiritual necessities of the faithful in the neighbouring villages. Thus was born the « Parish » as we know it today. The Church could have created new dioceses, instead of parishes, and kept the community constantly gathered round the bishop.

Once they had been set up, the parishes did not become closed units. Their real shepherds were always the bishops, with the parish-priests as their collaborators (*cooperatores ordinis nostri*). In other words, the parish was and remains to this day, even after the decree of the Council of Trent sanctioning their existence, part of the Diocese, just as suburbs are parts of a town. They were, therefore, open and dependent communities.

If such are the conditions, the community outlook in the Teaching of Religion supposes necessarily the outlook of the Church at large and, against this background, a certain « parish awareness. » Baptism incorporates the Christian into the Church, not into the parish. The former, of ecclesiastical origin, and the latter of divine origin, are institutions created respectively by the Church and by Christ, for the faithful, true members of the Mystical Body. Their importance in the Christian life is relative. They are parts, and as such, dependent on the whole. Canon Law therefore, while asserting that each one of the faithful has his parish-priest to whom is entrusted the care of all those living within the limits of his parish, does not oblige them to turn to him in their needs. It leaves them free to provide for their own spiritual welfare as they think fit. This proves that in the mind of the Church such institutions exist for the benefit of the faithful.

It must be admitted that especially today, when ever wider perspectives are offered to the Christian, insistence on the importance of the parish might be fatal to the ministry of souls.

III. OTHER PRINCIPLES

The parish, like the diocese, is a tangible illustration of the principle of the localization of the Church, itself a visible society by nature, requiring a place where the faithful can assemble to listen to the Word of God, receive the Sacraments and, above all, participate in the celebration of the Mass, in which the Church reveals itself to the full, as continuation of the Incarnation. But if the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments and the celebration of Mass require a definite place; it cannot be affirmed that this place must necessarily be the parish church, to the exclusion of any other. The parish, indeed, has priority, founded as it is, on the « principe territorial, » the most normal of all principles which bring people together in communities. By creating the parish, the Church has consecrated, at least in practice, this fundamental notion of social life.

However, the « principe territorial » is not the only one : men come together for many other reasons, as for example, the requirements of their profession or their trades.¹

Now, the Church, ever seeking to implant herself in all human structures, cannot possibly ignore institutions holding out such prospects for the salvation of souls. In other words, in the same way as the Church, by creating the parish has sanctified the « principe territorial, » she could likewise sanctify other principles of association among men by using them for the ministry of souls.

In connection with this, mention has been made of the creation of so called « category » parishes, gathering together for example, workers or clerks. The authorities are not in favour of these projects, except as temporary measure for national parishes in emigration areas. But the opposition does not entail a question of principle. The « parish according to categories might indeed appear to favour class distinction, a thing which the Church seeks to avoid. However, this does not prevent these associations being used for pastoral work beyond the limits of the parish, in which case they would become extra-parochial.

Here too, the Community outlook in the Teaching of Religion is none other than the outlook of the Church at large. The « principe territorial, » in spite of its pre-eminence, is not the only one. If the evolution of social structures were to impose on the Church

1. On this subject there is an interesting article by Karl RAHNER : *Friedliche Erwägungen über das Pfarrprinzip*, in *Schripte zur Theologie*, II. Einsiedeln, 1955, 299-339.

new institutions based on other principles, no theoretical reason could prevent it. The Church has herself founded and encouraged extra-parochial and extra-diocesan associations, such as Third Orders, Marial Sodalities, Catholic Action Movements, as they exist today in certain countries.

IV. THE PROBLEM OF DECHRISTIANIZATION

It is of no mean importance to remind people of the difficulties a ministry limited exclusively to the parish would have to face.

Everyone knows the painful situation made public in many countries by inquiries connected with religious sociology. We are referring to the phenomenon of dechristianization. The question does not only concern the mass of lapsed catholics, who, however, still retain faith in the depths of their consciences, but also the masses returning to a pagan outlook. The re-christianization of those masses is the most urgent duty of the Church in our traditionally catholic countries.

To come then to the point : Is the parish, created to uphold the faith, a suitable institution for the re-conquest of these so-called dechristianized masses ? There has been much talk about the missionary parish, and the necessity of transforming all the pastoral ministry into a missionary campaign. No doubt this necessity exists. But the real problem is : does the parish dispose of adequate means for this tremendously difficult work ? We have the answer to this question from those who have experienced and faced up to the difficulties in question. Abbé Michonneau, whose competence in parochial questions is universally acknowledged, affirms in his excellent book on « The Parish, Missionary Community » : « The mass of real pagans is not touched by the parish, and the latter, even if it were exclusively consecrated to the work of their conversion, cannot do more than touch the fringe of the problem. »¹ Hence the necessity of extra-parochial movements devoted to work among those masses. Abbé Daniel² and yet others³ are all of the same opinion. It is clear then how dangerous it would be to lay too much stress on the idea of the parish as indispensable.

Inquiries on religious sociology have revealed not only the fact of dechristianization, but also that of a progressive deepening of

1. *La Paroisse, Communauté missionnaire*, p. 371.

2. *Paroisses d'hier, Paroisses de demain*, Paris, 1957, pp. 248-49.

3. G. B. GUZZETTI, in *La Scuola cattolica*, 1953, spec. pp. 435 ff.

different mentalities according to differing social circles. The workers' mentality differs from that of persons following liberal professions, or living in rural areas. Therefore, if specialized parishes are out of question, it is the clergy at work in the parish who must be specialized. But how many parishes could afford, — with the increasing problems arising from the crisis in vocations — to have a specialized clergy for the various sectors of their apostolate? The only solution is in the creation of extra-parochial movements with specialists for the various social milieux.

Let us conclude then by saying that though the parish — founded as we said, on the most normal of principles, does possess a certain priority, there is no place for a rigorous « parish awareness » in Catechesis. All community-mindedness finds its fulfilment in the wider notion of membership of the Universal Church. There, the secular clergy and Religious both men and women, together with the laity, will all find their meeting-place. Every association having its rightful place in the Church will bring the faithful to that Universality which is the characteristic of the Church, Mystical Body of Christ, sole Mediator between God and men. And all the time, these associations will prepare and uphold the part the Christian is called upon to play in the dioceses, parishes, and various ecclesiastical organizations.

This being said, we recognize that, in the parish, Catechesis will keep a special character, and will not have in view merely the family, the school, or other apostolic movements, but will be complementary to them. But this will be the subject of another article.

‘Complete’ Catechesis : Essential Mission of the Parish

by LOUIS DE PERETTI

*Superior General of the Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception*¹

Catechesis is the task of religious instruction, but it is not only that; it is also active teaching in view of actual experience, it is the very life of this experience, with all the supernatural transformation which that includes.

Religious instruction is indispensable (Rom. 8, 14) ; the teacher of Religion plays an irreplaceable part in the life of the Church, whether he is a Master in Theology in a Senior Seminary, a professor of Religious Knowledge in a school or lyceum, or a Parish school Catechist...

But teaching alone is not catechesis, although it forms an integral part of it ; to « catechize, » in the full sense of the word, is to educate, to set in motion, to make the Christian mystery live.

What is meant by the Christian mystery, if not the mystery of Christ dying and risen again to deliver us from sin and to save us, to make us live by His very life, in order to build up the Mystical Body of Christ. To live a christian life is to enter fully into this mystery, to live it more and more. Catechesis in its full concept is « manducatio, » the introduction of the christian into this life, and that in a daily, continuous renewal, and with a deepening appreciation.

To Catechize, that is to say, to live the Mystery and to make it live, to live God's Love and give it a personal answer. In the Divine Plan that can only be done in and through the Church, and we can realize it to perfection in and through the Christian community formed by the parish, a life-cell of the Church.

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Where and how can entrance into this real and actual life be realized ?

Every group of Christians, every life-cell in the Church, beginning with the Christian home, and including Religious movements and branches of Catholic Action, all and each of these, lead us to this life, make us live this life.

But, in fine, to achieve its complete reality, this life depends on those strictly sacerdotal acts which are the Sacraments ; the Sacraments are the mysteries which make us live Christ's Mystery.

There is no Sacrament without the Bishop, life flows from him who, by his episcopal consecration, his hierarchical grace, has been constituted successor of the Apostles and dispenser of their powers, not only of magisterium and government but of sanctification ; he is the dispenser of the ministerial priesthood, he is the indispensable channel of life, of the priestly life of Christians, « regale sacerdotium. »

There is no Catechesis without the Bishop... and his collaborators. It is quite certain that every priest is a direct co-operator with his Bishop, and the priesthood contains no separate categories.

But the missions confided by the Bishop to his priests are various. Pastors, parish priests, of each territorial section of the Church which constitutes a diocese, rectors (and their assistant curates) are specially in charge of the Catechetical mission.

If the parish includes a considerable amount of government, administration and organization, its special mission is Catechesis, privileged meeting-place of instruction and the sacramental life ;¹ of which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is both the centre and summit.

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A live parish then will be one in which everything is Catechesis, either directed towards it or flowing from it.

Everything is Catechesis. Everything : obviously the Liturgy of God's Word and of Praise rendered comprehensible,² and lived because it is understood, and in the measure in which it is understood.

1. From the « magisterium » and « ministerium » directed by the « imperium, » the three great aspects of the functions of the Bishop and his collaborators.

2. What shall we think of those purely formal readings in an understood tongue? Is it possible to be satisfied with them? By what principles? not by that of History in any case. When little by little, Latin replaced or was added to Greek in Rome, it was because Latin only was understood, Greek less and less so. Cfr I Cor. : XIV, 2-7, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 28.

Everything : the Mass, the very Act of Christ's Mystery, into which the Christian is led by short and discreet admonitions¹ by the deacon, and which he offers up, whose fruit he receives in the giving, in silence, and acceptance. The Sunday Mass especially, but also the week-day Masses, notably those of the week-days in Lent, period privileged above all others, which is a community gathering, raised up, by and in the grace received, in union with Christ, to the one and only Lord.

Everything : the Sacraments ; from Baptism which is the entrance to salvation ; Confirmation which is the seal of grace, given by the Bishop, father of souls, to strengthen and as it were ratify Baptism ; the Eucharist, Communion with Our Lord and the whole Church ; the Sacrament of the Sick, the efficacious prayer of the Church to obtain health, or the strength to endure illness in Christian fashion until the complete sacrifice of life, if such be the will of Our Heavenly Father ; the Sacrament of Penance, reconciliation of the sinner and return of the prodigal to the family of God's children, sealed by the Church...

The Sacraments can be given, distributed... rather like the distribution of tickets of admission over a counter. And they are Sacraments, with real efficacy. But if the Church adorns their administration with prayers, passages from Scripture... is it not because they are to be catechesis and an occasion for catechesis, for a deeper and progressive participation in the Christian mystery.

Everything : Matrimony, the Sacrament with a character apart from the others, which if it brings graces, has the chance of doing so in the measure in which it has been prepared for, and surrounded by careful and delicate catechesis.

Everything : Divine Services, visits from the priest, visits to the sick, the Church's Prayers for the Dead...

The parish alone, so it seems to us, is in the right position to carry out what we would willingly call integral catechesis.

Let us admit at once that many parishes do not realize this ideal, and split up this life ; there is worship, on one side, but which materially amounts to a mere re-union of the Church, (or rather we could say, a re-union in the church) ; and instruction, on the other, Sacraments which are administered, but which, even if they have been prepared for are not, for those who receive them (or for those who give them) a living language.

It can be seen that the pastoral anxiety for an active participation of the faithful in the Church's worship, is far from being a mania

1. Above all, discreet, encouraging silent work within the soul.

of pseudo-liturgists, a passing fashion to which one bows with a more or less good grace, but the manifestation of a vital appeal, of a vocation particularly essential to the institutional reality which the parish forms, as well as the answer to the pressing but little heeded invitations of the Holy Father and the Bishops.

No, there is question there of catechesis, the essential mission of the Church, *the irreplaceable mission of all* apostolate, mission and first duty of the parish¹; first of the parish in its strict sense, then of the forms of quasi-parish which are monasteries, religious communities, seminaries and even colleges and boarding-schools.



Such is, it seems to me, the place of catechesis in the real existence of a parish : essential and of the first importance. Such is the place of the real existence of a parish with regard to catechesis. It is catechesis which builds up a parish in the true sense, which makes it something more than a territory where Christians live and even practise their belief, makes it a live community of Christians who live the Christian Mystery to the full, or at least in continual progress towards this plenitude.



OBJECTION AND QUESTION...

The parish, local seed-ground of Christ's mission ought to realize all the aspects of this mission ; therefore not catechesis alone, but also Evangelization, government, service of the needy, Catholic Action, which would bring up the problem of social and even political « structures, » of civic education.

ANSWER.

It certainly would. These activities and many others are indispensable, either as means, as preparation, as effects, as consequences, as necessary or desirable results.

1. Does anyone imagine that a parish can accomplish its indispensable missionary influence, if it is not first of all a community of prayer, charity, christian life, if its members are not quickened and spiritually refreshed in a home which is spiritually alive? Beware of fragmentary ideas which reduce the reality to certain aspects, however indispensable these may be!

The parish «*ut sic*» does not exist ; it is always in process of becoming, in preparation... with various developments which become fresh sources in their turn.

The whole question is to know, not to what tasks, varied, manifold, more or less necessary, parish activity should devote itself, but what is the special procedure, the special mission of the parish as such ; the rest keeping its vital importance, but drawing its meaning from this orientation : «*abstrahentium non est mendacium.*»

In certain parishes which are rather territories destined to become parishes one day, God willing, than established parishes «*in actu*» (and there are many in this sense), tasks specifically catechetical will occupy less place. They will remain none the less the end to be aimed at more or less closely.

The intention of this article was not to describe parish activities, to settle their order of importance from a chronological point of view, nor from the standpoint of how much time should be devoted to each, but to establish an appreciation of value concerning the procedure of parish activity as such, and implicitly concerning the relative value of means or results of other activities, however important.

This does not merely provide matter for theoretical discussions more or less sterile. Appreciation of values directs our activity from within ; an activity could be identically the same as another, and yet be interiorly animated, directed in another way. The identity will be merely material ; strictly, and therefore very positively as to results, it will be quite different.

Parochial Catechism Versus School Catechism

by Pierre RANWEZ, S. J.

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In France and in Belgium, the word *catechism* calls to mind two realities, or rather two images :

— a booklet wherein is summarized, in questions and answers, Catholic doctrine ;

— lessons in which the contents of this booklet are explained, these lessons are given over a period of two or three years by a parish-priest, or curate, to 10-12 year-old children preparing for Solemn Communion.

Old habits of thought therefore run the risk of leading us to believe that the catechetical rôle of the parish-priest is limited to :

— himself giving a series of lessons

— to 10-12 year-old children

— explaining therein the catechism questions and answers.

This rôle would not be adequate, for :

— if the priest was the only catechist his action would be too restricted ;

— if he only dealt with 10-12 year-olds, the younger and older children would escape him ;

— if the essential character of the lesson consisted in explaining the catechism answers, a very important field of action, in the awakening, culture and strengthening of the faith, would be forgotten.

I would like to insist on this last point, particularly in view of the actual state of religious instruction in Belgium. In this country religion is taught in schools and, by virtue of the School Pact ratified by law, this teaching will penetrate more and more within the schools. It is therefore no longer desirable that the parochial catechism should overlap the school teaching of religion. We can express the wish that these two « catechisms, » the school catechism

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on the one hand, and the parish on the other, be organized in such a manner as to respect their original characteristics.

Normally, the school catechism is more bent towards the acquisition, deepening and putting in order of religious knowledge. It will therefore have a more « scientific » trend, at least for the senior pupils, and it will help children and adolescents to acquire a sound religious culture.

The parochial catechism, on the other hand, will be more in the nature of a catechumen's initiation. It will aim at leading the child on to his religious maturity by developing his faith and Christian vitality within the ecclesial community.

For beyond the family sphere, the parish represents the Church to children ; it is the *composite community*, structured and hierarchically organized, in the midst of which the Christian personality can be awakened, nourished and developed ; it is especially within the parish that the religious life of children and adolescents will be sustained *by the sacraments*.

Taking into account these characteristics, we can bring out three aspects which must be enforced in the exercise of all parish pastorate. This will take into consideration the needs *of religious growth from the earliest years to the adult stage* : it will develop *as from the sacraments and by their mode of action* : its centre will be the Eucharistic life ; it will realize itself *within the context of the parish community*, having regard to the variety of needs and aptitudes.

We would like these three aspects to be fulfilled in the carrying out of parochial catechism, and that they should give it its distinctive features. We will try to show in what way.

I. SOME PRINCIPLES

1. The parochial catechism will take charge of the child from his early childhood to his maturity and beyond (Catechism of Growth).

To begin teaching the child his catechism when around 10 years-old is a bad plan, for one has allowed those precious years in which the sense of God could be easily awakened (3 to 6 years) to pass.

To stop teaching religion at the age of 12 is to interrupt a building before having erected the storeys and the roof. The building runs the risk of tumbling down and in any case the work remains incomplete and fragile. The years of adolescence, which are a sort of new birth and the time when the personality develops, must certainly be enlightened by an adapted form of religious instruction.

Some people think — « This is an impossible suggestion, for if the clergy already find it so difficult to ensure the catechism for two or three years, it is utopian to propose extending the period of obligatory catechism. »

In replying to this objection, we will take into account two considerations :

1°) In parochial catechesis, the main rôle of the priest is not to, himself, give the catechism lessons, but to be the animator of numerous collaborators. We will deal with this point in connection with our third principle.

2°) The parochial catechism we recommend does not consist in a series of frequent and regular courses given throughout the weeks and months, but — besides introductions to liturgical celebrations and the commentaries of these celebrations of which we will speak in our second point — in periods of varied lengths at the main turnings in the religious life of the child and the adolescent — which constitute the high pressure periods of his religious formation.

When will these high pressure periods occur and what length of time will it be necessary to prolong these intensive courses of catechesis ?

First high-pressure period : preparation for First Communion at the age of 7. Besides the family preparation, the most important one, which should take place for many years before reaching the age of 7, a group preparation could be envisaged for a period of about two months for children nearing the age of 7, at the rate of two meetings a week. Several of these meetings would consist in a Mass accompanied by a commentary, in which the children would be asked to take an active part.

Second high-pressure period : preparation for Solemn Communion and the Renewal of the Baptismal Vows.

Here we come across what is usually called the parochial catechism. This institution has been specially organized and developed for the formation of those children who do not receive religious instruction at school. When this catechism is given to children who are already taught in school, there is a form of overlapping. We would ask ourselves how — *in cases where children receive a sound religious teaching in school*, and insofar as the diocesan regulations allow, the preparation for Solemn Communion could be envisaged.

An intensive six months of preparation could be envisaged. This preparation would be associated with the Eucharistic celebration, daily if possible, and a weekly confession. It is to be desired that the last phase of this preparation should coincide with Lent and that

the use of successive investigations in the course of the Sundays preceding Easter be resumed. The final solemnity would take place during the Paschal Vigil.

We do not mention a *particularly important high-pressure period for the preparation for Confirmation*; for indeed this occurs according to the districts, at different ages. In any case a serious preparation must be envisaged. Some times it coincides with preparation for Solemn Communion, or even with preparation for First Communion.

Third high-pressure period : preparation for the promise at the end of adolescence.

At the time of adolescence, the young Christian reviews his options, he sorts out the spoils of his childhood, confronts the Christian message with the human values he is discovering and directs his efforts towards a future career. In many youth movements the adolescent is asked to make a promise. Such is the case in the Scout movement, when the boy becomes a Rover. Could not a greater number of young people be given the advantage of making a promise of the kind? Care will have to be taken, however, to avoid all indirect pressure, and to maintain an intimate character for this ceremony. A preparation for this promise could be envisaged in the form of study-circles over a period of one or two years. Those who would prefer not to go to the extent of formulating a promise of fidelity and service would nevertheless benefit by these study circles.

Fourth high-pressure period : preparation for marriage.

The time of betrothal is a period when one is specially receptive; it has an influence on the rest of one's life. Besides a recollection or a retreat (or both) and a few conferences, it would be a good thing to arrange for meetings in a friendly home, for the purpose of information and exchanges between engaged couples.

2. The parochial catechism will be intimately united to the sacramental and liturgical life (a liturgical catechism).

The development of notional knowledge will specially be effected in the school, while the parish will be asked to enlighten the faith and Christian life in a context of prayer and action, as we have stated above.

Parochial catechesis will therefore in many ways be liturgical and sacramental.

First of all, as we have demonstrated above, it will pay particular attention to the preparation of the great sacramental stages of

Christian life : First Confession, Confirmation, First Communion, Marriage...

Then, and we would insist on this point, habitual parochial catechesis will take part in the liturgical celebrations ; it will consist in an introduction and commentary of the readings, hymns, prayers and liturgical rites and it will eventually unfold itself in paraliturgical celebrations.

The heart and centre of parochial catechesis must be the Holy Eucharist. The Sunday Mass, assembling the community around the altar for a fraternal participation in the Eucharistic mystery, will be the regular occasion for an instruction to the entire community. It has elsewhere been sufficiently explained how this teaching given to the Christian congregation must emanate from the ceremonies and readings as a whole and become explicit in the homily.

Although primarily intended for the adult community, this Sunday teaching will benefit the younger ones and do this in two ways : first because indeed the word of God is intelligible to both young and old, and it is not so much intellectual perspicacity as docility to the Spirit which a Christian needs to accede in some measure to the mystery ; further, the adults who are for the most part Christian parents will quite naturally be led to explain to their children, more in detail, what they heard together at Mass and during the sermon.

However, a Eucharistic initiation limited to Sunday celebrations only is not sufficient for the formation of children and adolescents. It will be useful to organize children's Masses for preparation for First Communion, then for Solemn Communion and other notable circumstances. Four points need to be watched over : the establishment of sufficiently coherent groups to form a real community around the altar (the younger the children, the smaller the group) ; the saying of these Masses in a suitable environment (a chapel rather than the central aisle of a church ; the altar facing the congregation if permission for this can be obtained) ; correct and eloquent liturgical celebration (bringing out clearly the various phases of celebration : entrance rites, liturgy of the Parousia, sacrificial liturgy, concluding rites) ; active participation of the children (responses, gestures, hymns, processions).

The sacrament of Penance should often be the occasion of a celebration intended to help children adopt the right attitude of soul. This celebration would comprise the reading of a passage of the Scriptures, for example, the parable of the prodigal son, an examination of conscience proposed by the priest, penitential invocations, a hymn, etc.

Baptism and Confirmation would, in the same way, be the starting point and support of an appropriate catechesis.

The sacramentals will also be the occasion of commentaries inserted within a paraliturgical celebration.

3. The parochial catechism will be realized within the context of the parish community with due regard for the diversity of needs and aptitudes (community catechism).

The priest's catechetical task in the parish is a complex one : he finds himself faced with a variety of needs and aptitudes. An inadequate solution on his part consists in seeing the needs and endeavouring to meet them personally as far as is possible ; in such cases, the possibilities of a priest being limited, the catechetical work in the parish will be reduced to one or two sectors ; for example, the priest will teach the catechism to children of 10 to 12 and, occasionally, he will give instructions to engaged couples in view of marriage.

The best solution consists in harmonizing the aptitudes of members of the community to the needs of other members of this same community. The priest will therefore need to make inquiries, establish a plan of action, discover catechistic vocations, direct, animate and co-ordinate their actions.

The complete description of what this distribution of tasks could be would take us further than is possible in an article. We will therefore merely envisage some forms of structured community catechization.

The case of the youngest children is one of the most significant. It is of great importance to watch over the religious formation of the child, not only before the age of 7, but also before the ages of 3 or 4. The priest cannot directly take charge of this, but on the other hand if parents are left to themselves and are not aided, this task will often be neglected. Therefore, parents must be trained. Once again the problem rebounds. Will the priest alone take on the work of training parent-catechists ?

Indeed no ! He can succeed in training parents in two ways : by having recourse to specialists in the religious formation of families (chosen in the parish or elsewhere) who will come and give a few lessons or lectures ; by encouraging the formation of family groups within which it will be possible to study these problems of religious formation ; it is, in any case, advisable that these meetings for research and study should be held with the aid of the priest.

When the children's Masses for the 6-7 year-olds are organized,

it will be necessary to call for the collaboration of teachers or monitors.

At the time of the *preparation for Solemn Communion*, it will be most advantageous to group the children into small sections for work, mutual help and friendship. These boys and girls' sections will be entrusted to monitors of each sex, or better still, to mothers of families who will, on occasion, welcome to their homes the groups for which they are responsible. The children thus gathered together and made welcome will be happy to work and pray in a friendly atmosphere ; those children whose parents have not much religion will see for themselves what a Christian home is like and will be able to find there encouragement and help.

For the catechesis of *adolescents*, it will be very useful to contact those responsible for youth movements.

Concerning the over-all pattern of the religious formation of children and youths, one of the main objectives the parish should strive after is the re-grouping within the parochial context of the children separated or dispersed through school life or different social status.

During the period of *engagement* several clear statements will have to be made. The whole of the Christian message will have to be reviewed, the religious significance and obligations of marriage disclosed, the manner of bringing up little children in a religious way taught. To face up to these requirements, a complex organization can be set up. In many cases it would be advantageous to establish an inter or supra-parochial organization. It would comprise a certain number of courses or lectures given by specialists, the possibility for fiancés to attend a recollection or retreat, an invitation for these couples to spend one or several evenings with an experienced couple who would give them advice and counsels, and finally, the setting up of regular meetings of several engaged couples in a friend's home, to investigate some of the problems of matrimony, family and education.

One specially delicate task of catechesis is that of the instruction of *adults* who are considering returning to the practice of their religion, or to the faith.

It should perhaps be admitted that these conversions are so rare because of the difficulties which the candidates encounter.

First of all the lack of contact between Catholics and non-Catholics and the weight of prejudices which result from this estrangement is the cause of the scarcity of these returns.

Further, competent instructors are so rare that the journeying back to the light is very laborious work.

Finally, the isolation of converts who have had to partially break away from their past circle and who are ignored by Christian groups, puts them in a painful position.

The Legion of Mary tries to remedy these difficulties to some extent and has met with a measure of success. On the other hand, family groups can become welcoming groups. Therefore, the answers should be sought along these lines. Often « catechumens » will be in need of an alternation of private conversations and more or less public lectures. Among these one would like to have a few biblical evenings as well as spiritual life exchanges.

The mainstay and summit of all catechesis will always remain the liturgical celebration, more especially the Eucharistic celebration. It is by attending these celebrations in which the word of God is proclaimed and commented upon in an intelligible manner, and the fervour of the community given expression, that catechumens and beginners will draw light and strength. The faithful, therefore, must be made to realize the apostolic importance of their rôle at this moment (especially during the Sunday Masses) and the whole community should be mobilized for a concerted liturgical action : the readers, soloists, servers accomplishing their tasks in a dignified way, the congregation answering, singing, adopting the right attitudes with conviction and zeal, seeking to harmonize their interior dispositions with the rectitude of their exterior behaviour.

Conclusion.

The catechetical rôle of the parish as we have just described it is extremely complicated. We have, in any case, only looked on a few of its aspects.

Among the educative milieux of the faith of the young Christian the parish plays the part of co-ordination and animation.

For indeed it is within the parochial context that *parents* must normally find enlightenment and strength to accomplish their rôle of educators.

Usually the parish-priest and his collaborators have the task of seeing that the *school* religious instruction is properly given ; if the latter did not exist or was inefficient, the clergy would need themselves to organize more complete Catechism classes for children and adolescents of all ages.

It will also be advantageous to create contacts between the parish clergy and those responsible for *youth and children's movements*.

Besides this rôle of co-ordination and animation, the parish

clergy, collaborating with the laity, take on a catechetical task of which we have tried to discern the dominant points :

— It seeks to be an instrument of *Christian initiation* during the whole process of growth, that is to say that, through it, the child is led from his earliest years to the stage of Christian adulthood, and that he is not only enlightened in his faith but upheld in his moral behaviour ;

— It is *Eucharistic, sacramental and liturgical*, that is to say that the teaching is in keeping with the celebrations centred around the Eucharistic Sacrifice ;

— It is *communal* and a *bond of union*, that is to say that it situates the child in the community in which he is to become holy and contribute to the sanctification of all the others, and it calls for everyone's collaboration.

II. A FEW APPLICATIONS

The outstanding features of parochial catechism as we have described them (catechism of growth — liturgical catechism — catechism given in collaboration) are not just abstract notions. We find them under various modes in the majority of parishes where an intensive catechetical effort takes place.

In this same issue, the reader will find several articles by parish-priests or curates describing experiments of the greatest interest, which confirm our thesis.

We would like to give here some examples of the catechistic activities actually taking place in certain parishes.

First example : an urban parish in which a catechism of growth is being established.

In this important parish the religious formation has been organized in such a way that, at each stage of growth, up to and including adulthood, Christians can benefit by an adapted religious formation. The following are the arrangements made :

- 1) For those under 7 years, the mothers are invited each month to a research and information meeting.
- 2) Children of 7 to 11 years are divided into three sections :
 - 7 to 9 have a monthly catechism class ;
 - 9 to 10 have a weekly catechism class ;
 - 10 to 11 are taught the catechism five times a week.
- 3) For the 11 to 15 year-olds, a « catechetical club » meets

twice a month with the help of the clergy, the educators and the adolescents themselves.

4) For the 15 plus, reunions of religious and moral formation are organized in which, aided by specialists, youths prepare for their future life in their profession and in marriage.

5) For adults, there is a course of religious knowledge and a biblical circle.

6) For those who seek to know, or who are faced with the problem of religion, a catechumenate and a consulting bureau are at hand.

Second example : a biblical and liturgical parochial catechism to prepare for Solemn Communion.

This is a rural parish. About ten children (10 and 11 year-olds) attend the two years of catechism. Three days a week they are asked to come to Mass and to the religious instruction which follows. The Mass is at 7.30, but as early as 7.10 most of them are already on the spot to ring the bells and prepare the church and the altar.

Before celebrating, the priest explains the Mass of the day (5 to 10 minutes) ; during the Mass he once more speaks, giving a homily. During the celebration the various duties are distributed between the children and adults present : servers, group entrusted with bringing the offerings, readers.

When Mass is over and the church put in order by the children, they all proceed to the presbytery and have breakfast. After which, for half an hour, the priest gives the catechism, the main part of which consists in a commented reading of the Bible. The commentary, both enjoyable and profound, helps to grasp in its source, the freshness and vitality of the message.

Third example : a liturgical initiation to Solemn Communion and Confirmation.

This is a suburban industrial parish. The First Communion catechism is given in the usual manner, but a serious liturgical participation helps the children, as well as the adults, to grasp the value of the message and partake of the life of grace. One of the most characteristic examples of this liturgical initiation is the preparation for Confirmation. For the most part, this sacrament is conferred on Whit Monday and is preceded by a series of eight preparatory exenings. These are not, in any case, reserved solely for those being confirmed, but with them are grouped their parents, sponsors, and

other parishioners who can come. These vigils take place at 7.30 p.m. They last an hour and include the celebration of Holy Mass. Passages from the Bible are read, alternating with commentaries ; also there are hymns and prayers. The celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation itself gives rise to a very suggestive and interesting catechesis. It takes place after the homily which follows the reading of the Gospel during the Mass. Gestures, movements, ritual phrases, commentaries, hymns, prayers... everything contributes to help the children, and the adults accompanying them, to understand to some extent the supernatural and mysterious gift which is offered in this celebration.

Fourth example : a communal celebration of Baptism.

In this same parish, Baptism is normally celebrated before Mass (the child carried in the arms of its godmother, or by some other communicant, is in some way initiated to the Eucharistic banquet). Between the different parts of the sacramental rites a commentary and a hymn awaken suitable dispositions in the congregation. The movements do not just consist in a few steps (barely one) within the confines of the Baptistry, but are real displacements.

In a large town parish, Baptism is also made the occasion, not only of an effective sign of grace for the baptized, but of a teaching for everyone. In the porch, the choir sings a psalm of hope. The parish-priest comes to welcome the family and friends. After the introductory rites, a procession singing hymns proceeds to the Baptistry. Commentaries are given and the texts read in an intelligible way. When it is possible, the responses are given by the whole assembly. The white garment placed on the child after baptism is not just a little square, but an ample veil which covers the whole of the newly baptized.

The Baptism being over, the assembly singing the Magnificat in French and then Psalm 23 with the Antiphon « Swing back, immemorial gates... » proceeds up the central aisle to the Lady Chapel. There, when the child's mother is present, the churching takes place. It is an understood thing, of course, that if the parents wish it, baptism takes place the day after, or the second day following the birth, but it is in full conformity with the spirit of the Church directives to wait until the mother is able to attend.

Fifth example : catechism in collaboration with the priest.

In the suburban parish to which we now refer, the priest knows that the catechism lessons given at school are very good ; as far as

possible he watches over the quality of this teaching ; therefore, when religion teaching is the subject of parish meetings, he insists on the biblical and liturgical aspect of religious formation. He dispenses this formation in collaboration with the parents and the community of the faithful. This is one of the ways it is done. The first catechism lesson of the week is given by the priest, but one of the following days the children are assembled in small groups of 6 to 7 in one or other home where usually the mother of the family welcomes them. She presides over the catechism home-work which has been proposed at the previous meeting. This work in common gives the occasion for exchanges, for clarifying matters, in short for a family commentary of the Bible and catechism. After this reunion, the children are expected to bring their religion exercise-book up to date. This is done at home and very often the parents help.

Sixth example : a catechism experiment in a group of parishes (four deaneries of Liège).

Origins of this experiment. — At the end of 1955, an important mission was organized in the town of Liège. A thorough inquiry had prepared it. One fact was evident : the evangelization of children and young people left much to be desired ; the problem of the catechism was obvious.

Antecedents. — As in the other Belgian dioceses, the catechism in Liège was the foundation of religious instruction at school and in the parish. A programme and directives, also common to several dioceses, gave the method. In Catholic schools, religion was taught with devotion and competence. Well-trained, delegated catechists penetrated into all the State schools, were usually made welcome, and gave excellent lessons to the majority of children. Since 1953, the « Centre de formation religieuse de l'enfance » established rue Forgeur, had adapted Abbé Daniel's booklet « *Vivre en Chrétien dans mon quartier* » to the Belgian catechism and several parishes had adopted this booklet. Despite all these positive facts and many others, the teaching of parochial catechism was laborious and the results not very satisfactory. Didactic and notional teaching predominated at the expense of a more spiritual and interior penetration.

Successive stages. — The clergy, encouraged and supported by the hierarchy, were determined to breast the tide.

In 1956 a committee for work and study was established under the presidency of Rev. Father Pochet, Dean of St. Jacques. A new

enquiry launched in the 45 parishes of the four deaneries made it possible to have more precise information on the catechism situation. In 1957, the clergy was invited to attend study-days.

In this very same year a *first attempt* at renewal was made. To children of the first year (10-11 year-olds) a rapid presentation of Christian life was proposed ; during the following months the history of salvation was recounted, the finest biblical texts were explained. For children of the 2nd year (11-12 years) the third textbook by Canon Colomb « *Avec le Christ Jesus* » was used as a guide. However, at the end of the year, the biblical programme for the 10-11 year-olds was found to be too exclusively historical.

In 1958, a *second attempt* was started. Canon Colomb's textbook remained as basis for the second year teaching, but for the first year Françoise Derkenne's « *La vie et la joie au catéchisme* » was adopted. The use of this book seemed to be so entirely satisfactory, that the *third attempt* which begins in September 1959 will take the two volumes of « *La vie et la joie au catéchisme* » for both years. Children of the second year are also given the Sunday Missal of Father Feder « *Pour célébrer l'Eucharistie* ».

This is the weekly time-table adopted by one parish :

For the Junior Catechism, a doctrinal explanation by the priest on Mondays from 11.30 to 12, and a celebration on the theme explained on Fridays at the same time.

For the Senior Catechism, two doctrinal explanations, Fridays and Saturdays ; a celebration on Tuesday, always at the same time.

For the two catechisms united together, there is a community Mass on Wednesday at 11.30. Further the mother-catechists welcome groups of 4 or 5 children in their homes once a week, at the day and time best suited to themselves. Here it is primarily a matter of the application of everyday Christian life. These mother-catechists are prepared for their tasks by a weekly or fortnightly meeting. At the times of Confirmation, they are normally called upon to be Godmothers to the children of their group.

First reactions. — Priests who have been able to seriously attempt this experiment (it extends over about fifteen parishes in Liège ; other districts follow the movement) appear delighted with the results. The contrast between the boredom of many of the old-fashioned catechism classes and the interest the new type arouses is obvious.

For the mother-catechists, it is a revelation.

The children fit in perfectly, this is just made to their measure.

As regards parents, some are disconcerted (it is such a change from old habits and routine), others rejoice to see the serious and deep effects of the work accomplished.

Some Considerations. — The reform of the catechism in a number of Liège parishes has its limitations :

— it is not accompanied, it would seem, with a corresponding reform in the school teaching of religion and therefore, it does not allow for a complete readjustment of the Christian formation of the children ;

— it is limited to the catechism preparatory to the Solemn Profession of Faith and, consequently, does not solve the problem of the religious formation of younger children and adolescents.

Beyond these limitations, the new reform has taken very positive aspects :

— it develops along a biblical context and on very liturgical lines and leads to a very spiritual and sound penetration of the message ;

— it is an initiation to Christian life before being a notional teaching and it links up with concrete life particularly at the meetings organized in the homes ;

— it calls for the collaboration of the laity and thus begins to give parochial catechism a community aspect ;

— it calls on the child's initiative on a variety of active occasions.

On considering these few Belgian initiative (we have chosen them among equally interesting ones), we perceive that each brings with it one or more elements, the aggregation of which, would achieve a complete success.

We are thinking specially — besides the achievements in the Liège parishes of which we have noted the limitations and positive aspects — of the catechism classes in the Mons parishes and those others in the primary grades of the diocese of Tournai.

The catechism revival in many of the Mons parishes (of which a partial description will be found in this same issue) is remarkable for its scope ; children are taken up from their early childhood and are followed on to the end of the period of adolescence ; the whole parish community associates itself in the effort at evangelization ; catechesis is definitely integrated in the pastorate as a whole and culminates in a liturgical celebration.

Throughout the whole of the Tournai diocese a comprehensive reform is under way. It begins within the primary grades of the schools. Canon Colomb's method has been adopted.¹

All these converging efforts seem to indicate a clear and definite line of progress which will finally no doubt lead to a pastorate of childhood in which the family, school and parish are intimately associated.

1. The reader will note that Mademoiselle DERKENNE'S books entitled « *La vie et la joie au catéchisme* » (Teacher's Guide, 1st vol. first year; 2nd vol. 2nd year; Paris, de Gigord) have been re-edited in 1959. The author has carefully taken account of the remarks made in 1957 by the Episcopal Commission for religious teaching in France. These textbooks are therefore perfectly safe, as also those of Canon Colomb, with the adjustments indicated in the insets.

A Parish Endeavour to Revive the Catechism with the Aid of Parents and the Entire Community

by Canon M. LEVALLOIS

Dean and Rector of Saint Wandru, Mons¹

We all make the same experience in our personal and pastoral life ; what we achieve is often very different from what we wished or intended to do. Concretely, the work we do is rarely what we aspired to in our youth and the good we accomplish not often that which we wanted to do.

The lives of certain priests who have had a leading rôle in the Church, give startling proof of this truth. To speak only of those who are dead, let us remember the Curé d'Ars who, when he was taking over his new parish of Eculey certainly did not realize all the good he would do there ; Rev. Fr. Lebbe who went to China without having had a thought about native clergy ; the Abbé Godin who, when in the Seminary only dreamt of becoming a parish-priest in the Jura district, and who became the founder of the priest-workers.

Reading their biographies, one realizes that these men were actually only God's instruments, led and guided by Him. Their sole merit lies in the fact that they were humble and docile enough to accept the Will of God and to submit their own self-will as and when, in action, God showed them His.

The Abbé Pierre expressed this idea at the beginning of a conference given at the Mons Theatre, before telling of the origins of Emmaüs « Life, he said, is rarely a matter of choice. It is always

1. Born at Binche in 1902, Canon Marius LEVALLOIS was ordained priest in 1926. First, Curate at Pâturage, in 1929 he was appointed 'Directeur des Œuvres' for the department of Mons; he retained this post, at the same time serving a Nursing Home as chaplain till 1951, except from 1943-1945, when he was a political prisoner, chiefly at Dachau. Made a Dean in 1951, he became Head Dean of Saint Wandru in 1958. Canon LEVALLOIS has published several articles on Pastoral in *La Revue Diocésaine de Tournai*, *Paroisse et Liturgie*, and *Notes de Pastorale jociste*. — Address: Head Dean, St. Wandru, Mons, BELGIQUE (Editor's Note).

the acceptance, or the refusal, of a transcendent Will, a loving plan chosen by God for each of us from all eternity, and for us Christians the whole question lies in being sufficiently available to discover it and sufficiently faithful to pursue it to the end. And so, he added, I will tell you, not what I wanted to do, but what happened to me. »

That is what we in turn wish to do *mutatis mutandis* in the following short pages which we write at the request of « Lumen Vitae » : to relate simply, fraternally, how gradually we came to realize the importance catechesis should have in a parish and how we set up an organization which allowed our community to fulfil its catechetical function.

I. THE STARTING POINT

The first eye-opener we had in this respect dates from 1954. We were in retreat in France. A French colleague, a Doctor in Theology, straight from the Gregorian University, had just been assigned by his Bishop to go and follow the courses of the Higher Catechetical Institute in Paris. He told us about the efforts of the French Hierarchy to make the catechism more effective and advised us to read Canon Colomb's book : « Plaie ouverte au flanc de l'Église ».

This gave rise to a serious examination of conscience and to our conversion. Up to that time, for us the catechism was just a religion class which children must attend to make their Solemn Communion. It was a traditionally old-fashioned institution, rather lacking in vitality. It overlapped the school teaching in the case of children of free schools and Christian families. At the most, it retained a certain value for the children of schools which provided no religious instruction, and was an occasion for contacting parents through the catechism class and Communion. Among the parish works and institutions it was the poor relative relegated in a corner of the Church or in a near-by shed. We hardly ever talked about it at priests' conferences and rarely discussed its programme or methods. The only points with which we were concerned were : the regular attendance of children at the catechism class, the Sunday observance, the frequenting of the sacraments and the repetition of lessons ; in a word, the exterior conformity to the rules, the letter rather than the spirit.

At this stage we were very far from realizing the extraordinary influence of the catechism in a parish. Abbé Colomb's book had the merit of revealing this to us.

It needed, however, a second shock to set us going.

It came from our Bishop. In 1955 and 1956 at the Deans' meetings and in 1957 in a diocesan congress held in Mons at the beginning of July, he drew our attention to the importance of teaching religion and gave us very definite and precise directions for the revival of religious instructions in the schools and particularly in parishes.

What impressed us most in these directions as a whole was the continual insistence of His Lordship on the rôle of the parish community.

To be effective, especially in these days, catechesis must be the result of a series of collaborations, or to put it more clearly, it must be the work of *the parish community*.

The parish priest, even with the aid of several curates, seeks to achieve impossibilities if he thinks that a group of priests alone suffices to teach religion, be it only to the children of the catechism class. As we have already pointed out a great deal of collaboration is needed, that of the family, of the school, of voluntary catechists, of children and Catholic Action movements.

This is already quite a crowd, but it is not yet enough: « It is, to quote the Holy Father, all the dynamic energies of the parish which should collaborate, under the direction of the priest, in this primordial task of catechetical instruction.¹ In other words, it is the *entire parish community* which should become a catechetical community, not only because each of its members wishing to obey the precepts of the Master « *Ite et docete* » will become a messenger and missionary of the Good News, but also because the parish *as a community* will endeavour to create an atmosphere favourable to the perseverance of all its members and, particularly, to the development of the new generations "in fide and caritate." ²

We would wish that wherever possible parish priests should have a parish council to help them find and organize practical means of bringing the parish to take this in charge.

Thus the habit of periodical meetings for parents whose children are preparing for First Communion or Solemn Communion will be formed.

Within the same outlook, parents will be brought to take an active interest in the teaching of religion in State Schools, as well as in Free Schools. In this respect, the associations of parents of our Free Schools can take an active part by regularly placing on their agenda the problem of the religious formation of children.

This concern for collaboration will not be limited to the creation or strengthening of contacts between the clergy and parents, or between the school and parents, it will also accentuate the regular contacts between the clergy and the religion teachers of the State as well as of the Free Schools.

1. Cfr *Documentation Catholique*, n° 1198, col. 525.

2. Cfr *Lettres pastorales et mandements*, Tome IV, p. 270.

II. PUTTING THE COMMUNITY IN A STATE OF MISSION

We will not hide the fact that up to this time our efforts were specially directed to establishing in our parish a community of worship, apostolate and charity. We had given very little thought to its catechetical rôle and had not, we humbly admit it, bestowed the importance it deserved on this primary and fundamental task.

Undoubtedly, we took a lot of trouble over our sermons, and endeavoured to render them substantial, sound and capable of supporting the faith of our parishioners. We used to the best of our ability the traditional means of establishing and deepening their faith, but we had no general plan of catechesis, nor the wish to interest the whole community in the spreading and developing of the faith. Up to then our efforts concentrated too much on bringing into operation the various means capable of laying the foundations of and deepening the faith : sermons, courses on religious subjects, religion classes in the schools, catechism classes, study-circles, etc., and not enough on creating a community centre of faith, a community of genuine believers, animated, upheld and united by a dynamic faith, and a sense of responsibility regarding the diffusion of the Message.

His Lordship's directives had the merit of enlightening us, of convincing us, on the one hand of the absolute necessity of creating a true community of « believers » which would be « a favourable milieu for the perseverance of all its members and in particular of the growth *in fide and caritate* of the rising generations » and, on the other, of the « inadequacy » of the other means of evangelization, however numerous, if they are not integrated, carried into effect, and upheld by a vital and active community.

Our first care was therefore to bring the greatest possible number of parishioners and, through them, the whole community, to realize its responsibilities in the matter of religious instruction and the spreading of the Good News.

Very often, they don't think of it, or if they do, they see no way of carrying out their duty, except by giving some money to the Propagation of the Faith. When this is done, they believe all is said and done. In the sphere of Charity also, « most of the time an alms placed in the collection box » for St. Vincent de Paul, or an occasional visit to some poor is the sum total of their efforts.

We must neither accuse nor criticize. The greatest responsibility

lies with educators and consequently with us. Have we given them the right formation? Haven't we deformed them by remaining attached to out-of-date and obsolete apostolic formulae? Have we slowly and gradually revealed to them the problems of de-christianization of the people? Have we had the courage to look at this problem in its blinding reality, to investigate its real reasons and to apply the right remedies? Have we inspired the laity with a sense of responsibility and have we given them the possibility of playing their own part in the Church, an irreplaceable one, distinct from ours?

Certainly, in these last years, a real effort has been made to awaken Christians to their responsibilities in the matter of evangelization, especially within Catholic Action and its various specialized branches. But we are wide of the mark! In any case, this was rarely a parish initiative. Hasn't it more often been achieved in spite of the parish, which remained attached to its traditional forms of apostolate and would listen to none of these new methods? « It is time, especially in a de-christianized diocese such as ours, His Lordship declared at the Mons Catechetical Session, to rouse all Christians capable of doing it, so that, within their sphere of influence, they may take an active interest in the religious instruction of their brethren. » It is the entire Church, the entire parish and consequently every single Christian who must be drawn into this movement and « placed in a state of mission ».

Fortunately, for a long time past, the elite of our parishioners had been used to shouldering their responsibilities throughout the various spheres of the community life. We were therefore content with enlarging this sense of responsibility to include matters of faith and the spreading of the Message.

Two surveys, one made in the streets and districts of the town, the other in the Church, helped us. It revealed to all of us, priests and layfolk, how great were our responsibilities as well as the immensity of our apostolic task if we wished to carry out the *Ite docete omnes gentes* of Our Lord, that is to say the command of Christ to carry the Message to all our parishioners without any exceptions. They contributed, while making legitimate discriminations, to a sounding of the whole community on its own essential level, that of the faith, indispensable foundation of the apostolic, missionary and charitable spirit, and to creating a community climate which, once established, enabled us to think of collaborations and other means of keeping and propagating the faith.

III. REALIZATIONS

Five points retained our special attention. We will deal with them in the order in which we solved them :

1. The Material Question of Premises and Furniture.

Up to now our Catechism classes were in two sections, one for girls and one for boys. The premises used for the first were in the convent, this was quite satisfactory, but the furniture was very out-of-date : small benches, no blackboard, no writing tables. For the boys, the catechism took place in an outbuilding of the Collegiate Church which was also used as store-house. There was a blackboard and some chairs, but it was very dark and none too clean.

Our first decision was to change this state of affairs. Primarily, because to undertake a work of education requires a minimum of cleanliness and decency ; secondly, because material and spiritual things are linked with each other as much in group education as in the sphere of personal education. This is particularly true when dealing with children who judge things on the surface. How will they realize the superiority of the Catechism over the school, when the first does not even take place in clean premises while the second is held in a bright, well-aired and luxurious building. It was no trouble to bring the Parish Council and the Financial Committee to give the necessary premises for the Catechism and the necessary funds to equip them. A credit account of Fr 20.000.— was granted and allocated. Since then the whole atmosphere of the Catechism has changed ; it is no longer a class, it is a family common-room and here educators, children, parents, schools and parishioners have realized the importance of the catechism. These Fr 20.000.— are a very good investment which has already yielded 100 %.

In any case, further improvements have since occurred. Our classes have been divided up and the catechism given in the various sectors so that nowadays they are four in number. Two take place in town in the mornings, and the other two in outlying districts after school hours in the homes of the Curates who live there.

Evidently, this increases the reunions. But what a difference from the point of view of atmosphere and religious influence on the children whose numbers rarely exceed twenty, and also on the families and districts. Here is no longer a class, but a meeting of friends of which the Curate is the first of the 'rope,' the Big Brother among the youngest whom he endeavours to influence in

the Love of God, and among the others, enlightening them and sustaining them in the faith.

Never any more punishments, but a settled cordial atmosphere and a teaching which individualizes itself more every week.

2. Programmes and Methods.

This is what His Lordship said on the subject at the close of the Mons Catechetical Congress :

The first obvious conclusion as the result of our work, is the need for a thorough reform. It is high time we realized, for the organization of the Catechism as for Pastoral orientation, that we no longer live in a Christian world.

Less than in other periods can the main object of the catechism be the memorization of a set of more or less abstract formulae. On the contrary, the catechism must educate the faith of the child in a way that will give him a real understanding of the Christian Mystery. The child will have to live his faith in a completely paganized world, and also beyond the day of his Profession of Faith and of his Confirmation.

But other circumstances require that we give further thoughts to catechism methods and programmes : for instance, the knowledge we have gained these days on child psychology ; the centres of interest proper to each age ; the progress made in pedagogical sciences ; the « active » methods now used ; and finally, under the evident inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a return to the Scriptures and to liturgy.

This simple enumeration is sufficient to prove that, to be effective, the reorganization of methods and programmes must necessarily be thorough.

It is not so much a question of explaining and getting the child to learn abstract notions by heart, than of producing a live faith which will give rise to a real love of God and a true horror for sin. Not so much a question of presenting a system of obligations without reference to Christ, as of initiating the child to a personal contact with Christ, a most exacting Master, but also a very close and powerful Saviour. It is less a matter of definitions or a theological synthesis than a relation of the history of the love and the works of God.

Finally, it would be very regrettable if the religious formation of children was not connected with the liturgy, as this is the Church's official catechism, providentially intended to commemorate and introduce Christians into the mysteries of Christ.

His Lordship continued speaking on this matter, enumerating the different means he intended to use to sustain the efforts of those who would undertake to pursue this diocesan and parochial catechetical revival : the creation of a diocesan office of religious instruction ; the opening of a school for catechists ; etc.

I can but praise the zeal, ardour and spirit of obedience of my colleagues and of the nuns directly responsible for the catechism in our parish. Without hesitation and very humbly, they settled down to work, prayer and study, pooling their considerations and experiences among themselves and with the competent authorities.

Things are far from being settled, but I can state that we are all delighted with the new method and none of us would wish to go back to the old. The firsts to benefit by it are the children, they discover that religion is life and not just doctrine or a code of morals, and that between the religion class in the school and the Catechism there is a difference, that which exists between a mere doctrinal statement and life.

Educators also profit by it. They think over theology from the viewpoint of life, and whether they will or not, they are drawn towards an incessant contemplation with great profit for their life of union with God and for the whole of their ministry.

Finally, parents are led to think again about their religion and to live it with their children.

3. Collaboration with Parents.

As soon as we arrived at Sainte-Waudru, we endeavoured to establish very close contacts between parents and catechists, as we were quite certain that, without the family and without the parents, the greater part of our efforts would be fruitless.

The Christian Women Workers' League organized each year, on the occasion of the Solemn Communion, meetings of the communicants' Mothers. We called on their collaboration, but at the very first meeting we realized that it was already too late and that one reunion was insufficient.

Therefore, the very next year, we asked the parents to come themselves and enrol their children, and we took advantage of their presence to hold the first meeting of parents.

The clergy and the catechists were there in full strength. Acquaintance was made before or after the meeting ; the parish-priest took the chair. The order of the day was simple. First of all the parish-priest explained the aim of the Catechetical Year, its place and importance in the life of the child, the meaning of the ceremony known as « Solemn Communion, » the rôle of parents, the need for, and many-sided aspects of their collaboration. After that there was a general conversation and a committee was established to take the immediate responsibility for the financial side as, although we dispense with the offering on the day of Solemn Com-

munion, it is an understood thing that the parents cover the expenses of the Catechism, or at least a considerable part of them. The religious education of children must have its place in the family budget. Furthermore, it is very important from the point of view of making parents realize that the Catechism is their business, and leading them gradually to take an interest in it. One of our colleagues then gave a few practical instructions : days, time, place, age limit, the spirit of the catechism, teamwork and mutual charity, etc. Parents undertook to keep to their obligations as educators.

This reunion was followed by two further ones, one of them held in December. We asked parents to give us their impressions and enlightened them on the catechetical method, insisting anew and in a more specific way on certain practical matters. The other meeting was held in April or May, according to the date of Easter Sunday. In this we explained the meaning of the ceremonies and settled the final details concerning the ceremony of the Profession of Faith. Meanwhile, the Women's League had arranged their usual meeting for the poorer families.

But this was not the end of our effort.

In January 1957, Dom Thierry Maertens, who directs the review « Paroisse et Liturgie » came to give a talk to the clergy of the district of Mons, on Lent. He revealed to us the richness of this subject from the catechetical viewpoint in connection with the children's Profession of Faith.

We all attended this lecture, and at our regular clergy meeting we decided to try the experiment.¹

Our first concern was to obtain the *willing collaboration of parents*.

We extended pressing invitations either by personal calls or by letter post. The result was most satisfactory : out of 71 families, 68 were represented.

The main ideas developed at this meeting were :

A reminder of what had been said at the first meeting : the essential thing is not the actual day of Solemn Communion, it is the year of Catechism. This is meant to be a training period from the religious point of view for children who will soon reach the stage of adolescence. It is a year of initiation to an authentic and true Christian life.

The central mystery of our religion is that of the death and resur-

1. The main idea of this lecture as well as the account of our experiment in Lent will be found in the review *Paroisse et Liturgie*, n° 1, 1958, and also in the booklet published in the same series, entitled *Carême, Catéchuménat pour notre temps*.

rection of Christ, which the Church recalls, inviting us each year to relive it with her and with Christ on Good Friday, the Paschal Vigil and Easter Sunday. She leads us to it through Lent. Long ago, this was a time of intense preparation for those who desired to receive Baptism. The whole of Lent was intended to lead up to this. Baptism itself was administered during the Paschal Vigil.

Your children are preparing to renew their baptismal vows. It would be most appropriate for them to specially apply their mind to this in Lent which, according to the mind of the Church, is a particularly favourable time. If they are so disposed, they will be able to make their promise at the Paschal Vigil. For that, we do not add anything to the ordinary Christian life. We intend making the best use of the 8 o'clock Sunday Community Mass, to which the most fervent members of the parish come, giving a special sermon taken from the appropriate texts of the Scripture and centred on the renewal of the promises and the celebration of Easter.

We ask you to come to the 8 o'clock Mass with your child and to talk to him during the week on the subject which will have been explained in the Sunday sermon.

We also needed the co-operation of the *whole community*, and we requested it at all the Masses of Quinquagesima Sunday, inviting our parishioners to come for preference, during Lent, to the 8 o'clock Mass.

The children must see the Christian community in which they are about to enter ; they must feel it around them, as we remarked : « Your personal example as adult Christians, singing and affirming your faith, communicating in the same faith, the same Christ and the same Charity, will be more eloquent and will do more than all the lessons and sermons we can give. »

Those who wish for more details on the organization and subject of these Lenten sermons will find them in the article and booklet cited above.

We shall perhaps be asked what results we have achieved. It would be difficult to give statistics. In any case we have for a long time past refused to estimate and assess the effects of grace in our community in terms of numbers « One soweth, another reapeth. » But it is certain that during the whole of this Easter Time, Christ was active in our priestly souls, in the souls of the parents, of all the good Christians, of the children, in fact in the whole community.

Moreover, since that initial year, encouraged by the good will of parents we have increased the number of meetings from 3 to 7.

The first of these takes place at the time of enrolment, as described above.

The second, in October, is held, as is the Catechism, in the sectors of

the town, where the small numbers of much the same standing feel at ease among themselves and get talking. We go over the main ideas expressed at the first meeting to make quite sure that the parents are in entire agreement with the end in view, and in order to foster a united spirit. We explain the merits of the Colomb system and tell them what they should do. By that time many have already made the experiment.

The third meeting is fixed for one of the last days in November, just before Advent. The subject is the liturgical cycle, its meaning, importance and value for Christian education. We state the significance of Advent and Christmas, and we explain what activities we will propose to the children and the collaboration we expect of parents, giving some of them the opportunity to impart their own experiences.

Just before Lent, we organize the fourth meeting, always by sectors. Obviously, the subject is Lent, starting-point of the celebration of the Paschal Mystery, time of catechumenate. This is when we make the position quite clear regarding the Lenten Services and invite parents to come with their children to the Community Mass on all the Sundays in Lent.

The fifth meeting takes place in the presbytery the week before Passion Time, and is for all the parents. It is devoted to the explanation of the Paschal Mystery, of the Paschal Vigil, of the Profession of Faith, and to giving the final instructions for the retreat and the Holy Week ceremonies.

The sixth meeting is fixed between Easter and Whitsunday. We discuss Confirmation, the rôle of sponsors and the ceremony of the Solemn Communion of those confirmed.

Finally, the seventh occurs after the Solemn Communion. We put together all our thoughts on the subject and talk of the future ; there is also sometimes mention of the initiation of the children to the problems of life.¹

4. Adapting the Catechism to Different Ages, and Young Mothers.

We had not, however, got to the end of our discoveries. Through our Parents' Meetings, we soon became convinced that it is too late to awaken Mothers to the problem of the religious education of their children when these are already 10 years old. It must be done much earlier, if possible as soon as the children are born ; the more so that at this moment the Mothers alone can provide this education. We therefore assembled the young Mothers. There were about ten of them. As best we could, with the French documen-

1. For more details concerning these meetings, their advantages, their programmes, see the two articles published in Nos 3 and 4 of « Paroisse et Liturgie », 1959.

tation we had and trusting in the grace of state which is due to Mothers, we got to work. They were all very pleased. The next year we extended this effort to the town ; 65 Young Mothers enrolled themselves, and 35 persevered to the end. The talks were directed by Father Ranwez (of the staff of *Lumen Vitae*). The point under consideration was the awakening of the sense of God in the very small child, then his introduction into the mystery of the Father, who calls us and loves us ; of Jesus, who saves us ; of the Holy Spirit, who converts us ; of the Church, who educates us. Every age up to the age of 7, when the First Communion is made, was taken in succession. Particular attention was given to certain subjects : prayer education, formation of the conscience, introduction to the Mass.

All this gave us very good experience. Not only did these meetings bring several of the mothers to a realization of their rôle of religious educators of their children and help them to carry it out effectively, but several of them undertook the preparation for First Communion of children living in their street or section of the town, obtaining the help of the other mothers. Further, from the parish point of view, this enduced us to broaden out our catechism, to think of establishing more classes, and no longer to have just one catechism class, but to have several sections adapted to the different age-groups.

At the present time we are busy trying to ascertain the appropriate rhythm for these reunions, the minimum of necessary organization, the collaboration required with the specialized Catholic Action movements.

5. *Perseverance.*

Another problem soon became our concern, that of perseverance. These children who had become attached to us through the catechism and to whom we had given the indispensable religious formation for their future life, were we going to abandon them ? Certainly, there are plenty of youth movements, church clubs, scouts, but they do not all go to these, and parents are not always inclined to send them. Moreover, religious formation is all the same rather neglected in the method used by each of these movements. So what should we do ?

Up to then, it had seemed impossible to bring the children together and continue their religious formation after Solemn Communion. But now, after a year of close collaboration with the parents and of experience with « Sector-Catechism, » what appeared to us impossible, suddenly seems not only feasible, but necessary, to put

our priestly consciences in peace and to meet the desires of some of the parents and children who feel that things are by no means ended with Solemn Communion and the finish of the Catechism, but that they are only just beginning.

Suppose we made an attempt, at least in two sections of the town, we said in June 1957. And today this is how we stand. 67 children attend the section, that is over 50 % of the Solemn Communion children of the last two years : 33 girls, 34 boys. 30 come regularly every fortnight, 37 come off and on. It is to be noted that about ten have just left because they are now 15 years-old. The problem which arises in their connection is that of the Renewal of the Baptismal Vows which we are rather tempted to place at this period of their lives, when they are just about to pass into the sphere of specialized Catholic Action. It is only since 1958 that we have had four sections, before, we only had two. 29 of the children have joined the Church Club or the Scouts, 38 do not belong to either. 22 attend the State School, and 45 the Free School. 15 belong to families who are, to a certain extent concerned with the religious education of their children. 32 are from families who are in sympathy, and 20 from indifferent, even hostile milieux. Our programme is based on Canon Colomb's book « Sous le souffle de l'Esprit » and we keep very close to present-day events. The atmosphere of these meetings is very different from that of the Catechism classes. The method followed is that of Catholic Action : « see, judge, act. » We leave as much as possible to the children's initiative who share out the responsibilities among themselves and to whom we entrust certain activities in proportion with their ages. There are no organized games, we relax, talk or listen to a record at the end of the meeting. The children come solely for religious formation which takes up all the time. This seems to us very important to « place » the « catechetical clubs » (as they themselves have called their reunions) with regard to other youth movements, and definitely show that it is the continuation of the catechetical teaching ; allowing us to stand on our own ground which leaves us free to contact everyone and, on the other hand, to appear simply and truly in one of our essential priestly functions : the ministry of the word.

Of course, all these sections and all this work takes a lot of our time. Every month we give over 200 Catechism lessons.

There are various ways of coping with this : grade the tasks, rationalize them ; drop certain good works which are no longer adapted to these days and recruit the laity.

6. *The Training of Lay Catechists.*

We will be brief on this matter. In the past we thought this was an impossible problem to solve, but now that we have given catechesis the place it deserves in the life of our community, we no longer hold this opinion. At present we have four lay catechists who are responsible for the children of 7 to 9 years, beginning with the preparation for First Communion, and for the section of 9-10 years (1st year of preparation for Solemn Communion). We have three students attending the regional Catechetical School and some Young Mothers who have taken on the responsibility for their respective sections.

All these, as well as a few parents, constitute the parish's Catechetical Committee.

In any case it is most surprising how, when one follows the Bishop's directives «in fide et Spiritu Sancto» which is his own motto, God rewards our efforts with His graces. The episode of the miraculous draught of fishes reproduces itself permanently. Everything consists in having the faith and casting forth the net *in verbo tuo*, counting, not on human contrivance but on Christian hope, and in understanding that the work we are doing is before all else that of Christ whose instruments and «useless servants» we are. All that is asked of us is that we should be entirely docile and supple in the hands of God.

Towards a Parochial Catechesis for the Young

by Abbé Félix MOERMAN

*Parish-priest of St. Pieter, Woluwe-Brussels*¹

1. *Reflections on the Parish.*

Belgium does not experience either a dechristianization or a hostility to religion to the same extent as that which may be seen in Marseilles and is described by Father Loew in his book : « Journal d'une Mission Ouvrière. »² Some passages however, seem to be a perfect picture of our spiritually underfed and indifferent Christians, as also of many of our parishes.

« If we wanted to sum up in a single word one of the greatest obstacles to the conversion of the mass such as one meets in suburban areas, we might say that the people want a 'Religion on easy terms.' An outward show of a few traditional ceremonies serves as a screen to hide the greatness and transcendence of God. Any awareness of God is non-existent. For them God is absent. People have literally to be 'carried' to church, 'carried' by the godmother to Baptism, in a taxi to their First Communion and to their Marriage, 'carried' for the last time in a hearse ; in every case 'carried' by sheer routine. 'In my family, it has always been like that.' »

« But the personal effort to draw near to God, to Him whose Mystery should awaken in us a sense of awe, the habit of pronouncing His name with a reverence born of filial love and fear, such things no longer even occur to them. »

We must therefore aim at a complete rethinking of the religious events in the life of our young people, urging them to break with

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2. *Journal d'une Mission Ouvrière*, Paris, Le Cerf.

the tyranny of 'custom,' whether at home, in society or even in the parish and do our utmost in a spirit of sacerdotal zeal and charity to lead them to the very threshold of the Christian Mystery which is none other than the knowledge of Christ, together with an initiation into the Sacramental life. A catechetical training based on the Liturgy will go far in achieving this.

It will be uphill work which finds all of us, the family, the parish and the clergy, totally unprepared. The sense of parental and pastoral responsibility has been blunted by counting too much on the Christian education given to children. The young Clergy leave the Seminary unprepared for their catechetical and liturgical rôle and find themselves faced with a task at once new and complex. Too much stress should not be laid on « good works » as the sole aim and object of parish activity but rather should attention be focussed on the essential ideal of the Christian life : the worship of God and the Community of the Faithful. The carrying out of such a programme will demand many sacrifices. It supposes a united clergy of a strong spiritual maturity and a profound detachment of self.

2. A Family Atmosphere.

The starting-point of our Catechesis must be the events of every day life. It is, therefore, essential that the parish should be a dynamic and adaptable community. Strange as it may seem, the religious formation of our young people can be achieved only if built up on the basis of a Christian community ; it is practically impossible to mould young Christians if they cannot be integrated into a whole where love reigns supreme and is proved by example. To become a Christian does not only mean being well informed as to the great truths of Faith ; it also means judging and acting in such a way as to make one's own, this life of prayer and charity. From such an atmosphere of charity we should expect to see a revival of Christian life together with a rediscovery of the meaning of the Sacramental signs.

We became aware of a change taking place in our parish the day when a group of children decided to adopt an orphanage in Korea. Here was, obviously, and indisputably, the rallying point where Christians, young and old, could make themselves useful and work hand in hand. Each one's possibilities being many and varied, each one's contribution benefited the whole. There was for instance, the preparation of a big fête with such thrilling items on the programme as « Marcellino, » « Davy Crockett, » « Fanfan la Tulipe. » At another time it was a missionary prayer to be propagated to children all over the world ; the formation

of a group to introduce Korean crafts ; the preparation of a Missionary Exhibition. With the approach of Christmas, when all the shopwindows were displaying their Christmas goods, a charitable appeal was launched for the benefit of the orphans and lepers of Korea. In no time various families offered to help in the organization of the Missionary effort. Some concentrated on collecting medicines, others, clothes and linen ; a team of boys organized a sale of small Korean flags to put on bicycles ; four sisters gave a little party one afternoon during the holidays to which they invited all their friends of the locality. A particularly interesting initiative was that of inviting Asians or Africans who honoured the families with their visit and entertained them with their stories.

And so a close friendship sprang up founded on fraternal charity and missionary zeal, between so-called Christians, up to then careless or lapsed, and among young people with little ideals or generosity.

The Korean Campaign brought everyone together to work for a common good. Undoubtedly much good was done to Korea by the gifts of money and parcels we sent out and by an exchange of letters, drawings and photographs, but we feel confident that it was first and foremost Korea that helped us, stirring us to generous activity and hospitality. Henceforth the door was open, and families and young people living in the same locality, were now linked together by the bonds of true friendship. Some of these families decided to go on holidays together. Two mothers of families, the one a widow, the other deserted by her husband, agreed to rent a flat at the seaside where they looked after a happy band of ten or twelve children, their own and others from the same parish, one of whom had lost her mother. « Bear ye one another's burdens » said St. Paul. These friendly contacts experienced during the holidays draw people closer together. They feel at home with one another, discovering, as it were, their common Christian background and they love to work, to relax and to enjoy themselves together.

Many such ways were found of making fresh contacts and frequent occasions for coming together. Korea was not the only one. There were the various concerns of the locality to be seen to. There was the Old Pensioners' Club with its Christmas and Easter fêtes to prepare and the annual outing and pilgrimage to Banneux ; the various Christmas celebrations in the Town such as the Children's Crib Competition, the street decorations to see to, Mothers' Day to keep up, halls to be provided for all the Youth Movements ; for those wishing to help with the painting and decorating of the Young People's Club, just so many and varied items claiming attention all the year round. All these things brought about a complete change in the homes, making as they did, fresh and exacting demands on the families, keeping them constantly on the alert.

We particularly want to stress the importance of these contacts for our young people. We have succeeded in focussing the attention of a certain number of families of the neighbourhood on these pro-

blems, on Youth Movements and missionary activities. There is assuredly a need of a deeper spiritual 'élan' such as only the priest can give. It is to him that young people will turn to be initiated into the work of the parish and local responsibilities, into a more fervent and radiating Christian life, into a fuller happiness in their married life. But what is most striking in the creation of this atmosphere of readiness on the part of the Clergy, is that it has brought many young boys and girls to realize the meaning of a really happy and united family.

It is against this background that the all-important part the parish must play stands out clearly : to create a community spirit amongst the young people and in Christian homes, and to bring this about, as it were, of itself.

There is no danger of « clericalism » here, no class or education complex ; only mutual emulation. The priest holds out to an élite of Christians the prospect of something more perfect, the putting into practice of the Beatitudes. They, in their turn, expect more and more from the priest, a greater generosity, a teaching more in touch with their needs. Together we discover our shortcomings and our sins and we beg God to help us. The best way to teach our people to pray is assuredly to kneel down with them in their room in front of the Crucifix, begging God to grant pardon and light — to say a Hail Mary with that big lad for the repose of the soul of his mother's paramour, or to recite the Père de Foucauld's prayer of abandonment with a desperate and broken fiancée — or to read some passages from the book of « Prayers » by Michel Quoist, to overcome a difficulty. No wonder magazines such as « Fêtes et Saisons » are so popular among our parishioners. The reading of the number on the Passion and the Resurrection, the huge sale of the numbers on « Mothers' Day » or on the Mass of the Curé d'Ars, make us stop and think and compare the Gospel message with our own life with its struggles.

We are convinced that in the parish, Catechesis should strike a family note, better still, it should be an « inter-family » affair, as the families and young people are so mixed together. There is of course a necessary adaptation to be made to meet the requirements of the younger members of the parish or of adults respectively ; but it is of the utmost importance to show that a wide exchange of sincere and earnest charity is the principal element in the christianization of the mentality and outlook of any particular milieu.

3. The Important Moments in the Christian Life.

To live in a climate of charity is one thing ; it is another to rediscover through mutual emulation the importance of liturgical celebrations and to give back to the Sunday Mass and other parochial ceremonies their rightful place which is none other than the very centre from which light and warmth radiate through the whole of the supernatural life.

We should first of all aim at a rediscovery of the value of the Sunday Mass, by inviting all baptized Christians to take their proper share in it. Mass is the first and most important source of Catechesis and for this reason any Christian Community worthy of its name should meditate on the celebration of the Sunday Mass, and consider whether all its members do feel at home and strengthened by this great action. Readings from the Scripture, preaching the Word of God, the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, must all combine in one harmonious whole made up of grandeur and truth, fulfilment of obligations and revelations of the Mystery. It is the climax of the Christian week, the meeting-point of Christians with the Living God, the ascent to the Father through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, of all human beings, with their works of love, suffering and happiness. The right atmosphere at Mass is vital : the commentaries must be discreet and down-to-earth, a reminder of some events of the week so as to show how our life can be assumed into the Mystery of Christ.

There is always the possibility of special Masses for the young. We have, indeed, celebrated them and accompanied them with varied commentaries. At different periods of the year, we have organized Masses for children attending the Catechism classes or for the Youth Movements. They must in all points be similar to parochial Masses, but it might be a good thing to find out from the young people themselves how we can best bring the Holy Sacrifice home to them.

At the beginning of camps, we have a meeting of all the officers, for example Patrol-leaders and Seconds of the Scout-camp. We point out their responsibilities to them. « What must we do, » we say to them, « to make of the Mass the great general assembly of the whole camp ? » Reactions are sometimes unexpected : fifteen-year-old boys who used to be bored to tears during Sunday Masses suddenly become full of ideas to account for their boredom and to awaken in their comrades reactions of prayer and faith. We decide what each one is to do : who is to be the reader, who responsible for the singing, who for the altar-service ; we see how the meaning of the offering can be related to the

watchword for the day. We insist on a faultless behaviour, but we leave the boys free. Should anyone feel that he cannot possibly put himself into the right atmosphere of prayer and union with Christ, he can say so and go for half-an-hour's stroll in the open air instead of going to Mass. What we want is to teach boys and girls to feel responsible for their Mass, and to seek out Christ for themselves. This is not all play : the method does not always work and may result in failure. At times we are up against bad will, as well as routine and monotony, dating from schooldays or the result of a certain worldliness pervading the Sunday Masses.

The « Camp Masses » make for sincerity in the religious behaviour of the young. It is true that out of forty-five boys attending the last camp, only twenty or twenty-five were daily communicants. Had we wished to do so, we could have lowered our standards and raised the figures of our statistics to show an increase in the number of Communions. At various meetings with the Scouts we had begged them to be perfectly honest with Our Lord. Their Mass must commit them in some way and upset the easy, even tenour of their lives. They should take advantage of the opportunity offered them, make a frank and courageous confession and start a new life. We had to fight year after year against this outward conformity and religious apathy, against an utter distaste for sacred things, aberrations resulting from the wrong teaching in childhood when a mass of false notions, utter drivel, exaggerated piety, took the place of a solid grounding in the faith. The mere word-for-word teaching of the Catechism and irresponsible parents were often to blame for this state of affairs. Before beginning to build up, we had to destroy these wrong notions. We do not realize sufficiently how much a superficial, naive and pharisaical Religious Instruction can distort the religious sense of children and to what extent the religion of a great number does not go beyond the Ten Commandments of God and the Five Commandments of the Church. To make teenagers understand the need for prayer and all that the Beatitudes hold in store of happiness for them is no light task. « The Diary of Dany » and the « Prayers » of Michel Quoist (Éditions Ouvrières) are excellent books for the young and provide food for reflection for educators.

Our duty is to avoid easy solutions, but to admit the fact of the spiritual poverty of the majority of our teenagers ; our duty is to try to make of our Camps, our meetings, our conversations, so many stages towards a choice, an election, a state of intimacy with Our Lord : we must bring them face to face with Him. It is with that aim in view that we organized the sort of spiritual adventure which is, in a boy's life, a fortnight's « camp » in the Ardennes.

This leads us to say a word on the subject of confession, which adults as well as the young misunderstand so easily and dislike so much. The confessional was for the Curé d'Ars the most wonderful

of meeting-places. But for the great majority of priests, who are no *Curé d'Ars* nor *Abbé Huvelin*, the confessional is a disconcerting place. We are often aware that for young people in particular, it is an obstacle to a sincere and thorough confession. It becomes a question of conformity to a set pattern, a quick getting rid of one's sins, encouraged by anonymity and the obscurity of the confessional. All of us have had the experience of such mechanical, rapid, meaningless, impersonal confessions. Christ's forgiveness indeed, remains the essential part, but the important thing is to know whether the boys and girls who come to confession, are aware of their real sins or merely of having broken what we might call 'police-regulations.' The problem of the formation of the conscience is of the highest importance, and to go a step further, we might say that it is more than forming a conscience : it is a question of how to rouse in teenagers a truly evangelical responsiveness together with a desire for perfection.

For several years, we refrained from putting any pressure on young boys and girls in this matter of confession. However it was during a preparatory Retreat for the « Communion Solennelle » that we made up our mind to try and avoid that sort of meaningless parrot-like confession in the village church. We explained to the children that going to confession meant coming face to face with Christ, as in the evening of a very hard day when they come back home to their mother ; that it was just like telling Our Lord all about their day, or their past week, not forgetting the falls, the shortcomings and the wrong-doings ; that it was begging Him to forgive them, as the child, ashamed of himself, goes to tell his mother about his mishaps and his naughtiness and implores her forgiveness. In this way, confession appeared as the noblest act a person could perform, kneeling down, as he does, and saying like the Prodigal Son : ' Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee.' In this way we were able to hear the confession of all those children in turn ; it took a very long time ; we were able to help them, as we knew their troubles and their obstinacy, their behaviour at home and their parents' worries. This « queuing-up » for confession during the game-period was most impressive. They themselves asked to come and open their hearts, and the priest tried to bring them face to face with Christ. This was done in the quietness and silence of nature. They would kneel down to receive the Lord's forgiveness, then withdraw quietly for a few minutes to the woods to pray or read a passage from the Bible. We have done the same thing frequently with Cubs and Brownies, or with the children attending the State Schools. This « tête-à-tête » between the child and his God ever ready to forgive, has always been equally overwhelming for us. We put the question frankly to the elder boys : « Do you think a more personal contact with the Chaplain would make it easier for you to go to confession or not ? Could he ask you

point-blank : 'After all we have been discussing together, would you like to go to confession' ? » Then, this was the opportunity for them to explain to us how they disliked going into the confessional and there, rattling off the usual list of sins. Besides, they said, they did not believe in God's forgiveness. The final round was eventually played at the end of a camp-fire, when, late at night, the boys asked to put things straight after two or three years of spiritual stagnation. Such confessions took a long time. It was the unrolling of an adolescent's life, with its struggle for purity, its first more or less doubtful experiences in love and the subsequent state of confusion they found themselves in. The words of the priest came down like heavenly dew, bringing the peace of Christ to the soul, though it might sometimes be hard to accept them when they called for generosity and revealed that « God has need of man. »

The spontaneous contact would sometimes lead up easily to the famous question : « Do you want to go to confession and put everything into God's hands ? » The answer was sometimes 'Yes' and often 'No.' There is the risk of committing oneself ; hence the priest's anxiety and the teenager's stubbornness. Even those who say 'No,' go through a sort of process of transformation, though in a negative way : they will become aware of what Christ expected of them and of having deliberately brushed Him aside.

Confession therefore, becomes the priest's chief concern in the friendly intercourse he has with young boys and girls. He must be simple and easy of approach, and not be an obstacle to light and grace and freedom. We realize anew how attractive the Sacramental act can become. The whole of our Liturgy should be renewed in this way by keeping in touch with the secret aspirations of the human soul. No good act can be accomplished without a certain intuition of the effect it will produce on the natural as on the supernatural plane. It must be presented in a language at once thrilling and resounding.

This being said, it is obvious that our efforts regarding Catechesis should tend to give their tremendous importance to the Easter Celebrations. Over and above the Sunday Masses, it is ultimately Easter that we must have in view. The problem is as real for the adults as it is for the young. The absence of preparation for, and initiation into the Mystery of the Passover, is the most striking proof of the mediocrity of our religious formation. We understand only too well what the Abbé Pézeril, Rector of St. François d'Assise, in Paris, tells us about the failure of the Easter Vigil Celebration in his parish. « A poor attendance, » he said, « and to sum it up : a bored congregation. » (Quoted in the Report on the Congress :

« Parole de Dieu et Liturgy, » p. 26 — Collection Lex Orandi — Éditions du Cerf.)

We are confronted with the same problems and they will be not solved easily. We organized Biblical Vigils on the most important themes of Holy Week : the Fire, the Light, the Word, the Bread, the Resurrection. But only a minority of young boys and girls took part in them. The reasons for this were the absence of interest in Biblical subjects, together with a lack of unity amongst the Clergy of the parish. We cannot easily break through these barriers without the help of a unified Parish Clergy. In a situation of this kind, the work unfortunately, cannot easily go ahead.

In the light of the Pascal Vigil and of the Mass of the Resurrection, we should be able to bring the parochial Catechesis step by step in line with the different stages of growth in Christian life. The feast of Easter, with its lesson of radiating Christian charity, should be the all-important end and aim of all the meetings, the undertakings and the aspirations of a parish. We fumble and still grope about for the right solution. There seem to be various key-posts to secure, many different ways of approach to study, if we want to create in all patience, a new paschal atmosphere of Christian vitality.

The Christians will not normally derive any spiritual benefit from the Celebrations of the Paschal Liturgy without a long preparation. On the one hand, it will require a serious effort during Lent, to prepare for Holy Week with a determination to do what is required to enter into its biblical and liturgical atmosphere. On the other hand, it would seem of the utmost importance to consider the Ceremonies of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation in the light of the Easter Celebrations. Lastly, Biblical meetings for adults, lectures and gatherings for teenagers and children should be organized in such a way as to provoke a fresh interest in religious questions. Such a result will come only gradually. Over-enthusiasm might spell disaster. A coordination of continuing and humble efforts however, would open the way with greater certainty, provided that each step achieves something, arouses an interest on the part of the Christians and gradually and unconsciously awakens in them a completely new understanding of the Christian mystery.

Let us make the most of our possibilities. We try to make of Baptism a great event, carefully preparing the commentaries, giving special attention to all the ceremonies and gestures, seeing that the family and friends attend the ceremony. We gladly invite Cubs and Brownies to take part in the Baptism Ceremony of a little child

in their neighbourhood or of a little friend of theirs. The children of the Catechism classes like to come to the Baptism of a baby whose mother and family have been particularly good to them, and this family-feast brings them all together.

Recently a most unusual Baptism took place. It was a gathering of all those who had worked for Korea ; they came to the Baptism of Michèle, the grand-daughter of the two parishioners responsible for the sending of medical supplies. Invitations were duly sent out in the name of the « Foyer des Jeunes. » Quite a respectable number of parishioners of all ages were present around the Font. We prepared the Ceremony together and by close attention to the gestures of the priest, the Congregation understood the significance of the biblical readings and the Psalms. This was followed by an extremely pleasant tea-party to which everybody was invited and which ended up with games, songs to the accompaniment of the guitar, and stories. To be a guest at such feasts is indeed being like Christ's guest, and a very joyful one too !

It need hardly be added that a gathering such as the above mentioned is the best Catechesis of Baptism for teenagers as well as the most wonderful discovery of the mysteries of pro-creation and of grace.

Another unforgettable ceremony was the Mass of the Angels, celebrated at the death of the three-month-old baby-sister of a Cub.

The children of the State Schools took a great part in this liturgical celebration where hope is everywhere present. Four Cubs carried the small coffin on a bier along the streets of the parish, a schoolboy carrying a Cross made of flowers and bearing the inscription : « To Patricia, lambkin of God » headed the procession. Triumphantly the children accompanied the little corpse to the church, singing the most beautiful of the Gelineau psalms and in this way they prepared an unforgettable children's Mass.

Whether it be on the occasion of a First Communion or a Renewal of Vows or a Marriage or a Burial, we endeavour to put into each the purest message of the Gospel, linked with the Death and Resurrection of Our Lord, His Holy Eucharist, the Passover, keeping in mind constantly the lesson to bring home and the aim of uniting in charity.

Mention must here be made of the Vigil of prayer at the death-bed of a young mother of the parish. The day following her death, the families who had known her met to pray together and find mutual consolation in the light of the Beatitudes and the Resurrection ; at the same time, all the children offered their Mass for her on the evening of the

Epiphany ; this feast is kept with great solemnity by all those who have made their « Communion Solennelle » during the past two years.

What we have said so far is concerned with the most important events of the Christian life : the feast of Easter and its continuation in the Sunday Mass and the various celebrations connected with the incidents of everyday life : births, deaths, Confirmation, Marriage. All this is a fruitful source of inspiration in teaching Religion to the young, in so far as each sacramental act is a means of opening their minds to prayer, grace, and a greater union with God. But there are difficulties to be overcome : the Latin language, the lack of initiation into these Mysteries in Religious Instruction, the lack of cohesion among the local Clergy and the prominent members of the laity in a community where tradition holds sway. Hence the necessity of a systematic Catechesis in the parish : a « cultural » Catechesis, according to Hofinger, and we could stress it more by adding : a Catechesis of growth.

There is no question of trespassing on the field of influence of the School. Our contribution to the formation of the young consists in a solid initiation in order to integrate them into a community built up on the liturgy and on Charity, which is the normal parochial milieu. This explains why we must give this initiation a special outlook ; it must follow the important phases of the Christian life, fundamentally connected with the parish : the first Communion at seven, the Renewal of vows and Confirmation at the threshold of adolescence, at thirteen or fourteen, the Celebration of the Eighteenth Birthday (« la Cérémonie de la dix-huitième année ») to quote the now well-known expression of « Ensemble vers le Seigneur », and finally the preparation for Marriage. This is what we mean by Catechesis of growth. However the suggestion still remains very much a matter of theory. Other domains are still unexplored, namely the Celebration of Eighteenth Birthday which is akin to the « Enrolement » or the « Promesse du Militant ». « When the young boy and the young girl reach the age of eighteen, they should have matured sufficiently to have a personal spiritual life and to take their place in the community of the Church » (*Op. cit.*, 175).

Our intention is to discuss the problem of a parochial Catechesis through the so-called « Catéchisme de Communion Solennelle », because it is in that field that we are most at home ; then we shall show its place in the pastoral work at large, as it has been described above.

*4. A proposed Method of Religious Training
preparatory to the 'Communion Solennelle.'*

It is clear by now that the Catechism at the parish should not be a replica of the Catechism lessons given at school. The two years of preparation before the « Communion Solennelle » should be spent in the most profitable way for initiation into the Mystery of the Passover and the life of Charity.

Here is a plan for one of these meetings :

Every Tuesday the children are invited to a one-hour meeting devoted to Bible reading presided by a member of the parish Clergy. On Friday they meet again in groups of five, but this time in the house of one of the parishioners, where, under the eyes of the mother catechist, they do some specific work on the Bible in a special Scripture book. During this meeting, where a family atmosphere reigns, directions are given to each child about his work and the documents he should collect. The actual realization of the work is supposed to be done at home and the child is strongly advised to ask the help of his father, or his mother or his brothers or sisters. This is in brief how the work is carried out. To make it complete, it should include the children's Masses, evening prayers in common now and then, visits to the sick, tea-parties and other occasional celebrations. We insist on the fact that those two years of preparation are most exacting and whoever undertakes such a task can promise himself a harvest of trouble, coming even from the best catholic families, from the school, or from the clergy. Their argument can be summed up thus : « What's the point of all those new methods ? We were never taught our Catechism by the neighbours ! My children are in a catholic school. It's quite enough ! What a waste of time ! What's the point of sending our children to a catholic school if the whole thing has got to be done over again in the parish ! » and so on and so forth.

During those two years of preparation, we make use of the memoranda of the Pastoral Association of Alfortville : « Initiation into the Christian Mystery » : « Vers le Christ avec le Peuple de Dieu » (Towards Christ with the People of God) for the first year ; « La Découverte du Christ avec les Apôtres » (Discovering Christ with the Apostles) for the second year ; « L'Église du Christ : Peuple nouveau » (The Church of Christ, a New People) during the retreat preparatory to the « Communion Solennelle. »

At present, we still retain the Alfortville method, but we have altered it, focussing our efforts on the « Missel quotidien des en-

fants pour célébrer l'Eucharistie » by Father Féder, S.J. (Maison Mame). Each child has either his own copy of this Missal, or a copy lent to him by the parish for the whole period of his preparation.¹ In this way, we are able to make the children familiar with various biblical and liturgical texts of great importance and at the same time to give them a basic formation connected with the Missal, the Passover and the Sacraments. The child is ten when he comes to us. It is the age prescribed in Belgium now, though it would probably be more profitable if he came eight years later, when he reaches the threshold of adolescence.

We take for granted that he has received a first catechetical formation at school. Our aim now will be the approach to prayer and the discovery of the Living God, so that the words of God Himself may have some meaning for him. In our first contacts with the child, generally in late September and during the month of October, we try to bring about the awareness of God. Here are a few suggestions for children's meetings, a printed copy of which is usually given to the Catechists.

1. « Who art Thou, Lord ? »

- *theme* : preparation for the encounter with the Living God, and remote preparation for Communion.
- *Biblical text* : St Paul's conversion ; a few verses of Ps. 118.

2. « Sheep without a shepherd »

- *theme* : Compassion of Our Lord, looking at the needs of the world, October, Mission month.
- *Biblical text* : « The harvest is plentiful enough but the labourers are few. »

3. « As the eagle he spread his wings » (Deut. XXXII, 11)

- *theme* : God draws us out of love. Example : St Teresa of Lisieux, 3d October.
- *Biblical text* : Those of the Mass of St Teresa of Lisieux.

4. « Too slow of wit » (Luke XXIV, 25)

- *theme* : Training to live as Children of God. God speaks to us through the Missal and through the Bible.
- *Biblical text* : Jesus and the Disciples of Emmaus.

We begin in this way with ten lessons on how to find our way

1. It is absolutely necessary that the parish should dispose of a sum of money to be spent on Catechetical work. It is no waste of money. Problems of rooms, documents, gramophones and records, costumes for biblical plays, are of the utmost importance.

about the Missal and the Bible, with our attention focussed on the Kingship of Christ, on the Saints and the Beatitudes (All Saints').

In Advent, a few lessons are spent on the various figures from the Old Testament. In the course of this first year, we endeavour to keep in close touch with the current liturgical events, but *in the light of the Old Testament*. Here are a few titles of lessons :

- « Arise, O Lord and Come. »
- « The Gospel starts with Abraham. »
- « Abraham, God's Friend. »
- « Abraham, Father of the Believers. »

If Abraham is the leading figure in Advent, Christmas and the Epiphany, Moses dominates Lent, Holy Week and Easter. We have to use a variety of texts which unfortunately cannot be found in the Missal. To remedy this absence, each group and each Catechist are given the corresponding number of « Fêtes et Saisons » (Abraham, Moses, King David, the Psalms) together with books on biblical references where the children can find suggestions for drawings and photographs. (« En marche vers le Christ, » « Le Christ est venu, » « Jusqu'à son retour, » by Father Babin and J. Servel, Lyon, Éditions du Chalet). After Easter and as a preparation for Pentecost, we read together the episodes of King David, a few Psalms and the great prophecies on the Messiah.

We bring home this Message of the Bible by means of plays, photographs of Palestine, or various games. But more of this later on.

During the second year of preparation, the emphasis is on the knowledge of Christ throughout the Bible and the Missal. In October and November, the children are taught how to become thoroughly acquainted with the Missal and its use ; they learn the meaning of the liturgical cycles or the interest attached to the feasts of Saints ; how they themselves should participate in the Mass and what is meant by a Missionary outlook.

In Advent, we start the liturgical cycle again, but keeping in view the coming of the Promised Redeemer. We give special attention for example to the great liturgical texts in the book of Isaiahs or to St. John the Baptist and the Blessed Virgin.

From Christmas to Easter, we follow Our Lord revealing Himself and His Love and ever present in the Sacraments. These revelations of Christ are all the time linked up with the liturgical texts of the week.¹

1. The reader will find, at the end of this article, an example of what is given to the young girl Catechist to prepare her Friday meeting. It includes the necessary directions for the work.

The crowning point of all these catechetical efforts was reached in the days following Easter when the preparatory retreat to the « Communion Solennelle » took place. Each child was given a little booklet, written by Abbé Paul Sauvageot : « Parlez-moi Seigneur » (Éditions de Fleurus) and containing the essentials of Catechesis on the Paschal Celebrations, the Covenant and the Sacraments. It is a good summing up of the two-year preparation in the parish.

The retreat itself had been carefully prepared a long way ahead.

Together with a group of young girl Catechists, the priest left the town to find a place in the country where the sixty retreatants could be put up. The White Fathers gave us hospitality several times and also the Young Workers' Association. The happy band of children were divided into groups each with its own helper, and bearing various names : « The Clean of Heart, » « God's Poor, » the « Mercy in God, » « the Peace-makers, » etc. Side by side with the Missal, the Bible and the Album of « Fêtes et Saisons, » we made a thorough study of Abbé Sauvageot's booklet. The timetable included three assembly-meetings, mostly « Celebrations of the Word » and three group-meetings for various activities.

Starting from the discovery of the supreme Goodness of God in the creation and in the world, the children were asked to collect documents about Nature : flowers, stones, feathers, insects, plants, etc. for an exhibition. They cut out pictures from Exploration books to put on the walls of their various House-rooms ; they rehearsed tableaux on St. Francis of Assisi and the Canticle of the Sun, or on « Marcellino. » Flowers and twigs of spruce-fir were put on the supper table. There was a prevailing atmosphere of joy and song.

To learn how to ask pardon, records were used, for example Jacques Brel (the Devil) ; the life of St. John the Baptist (Festival Record, 45 revolutions, Patron-Saints) ; the « Pardon » by Marie-Claire Pichaud. We discussed together what they liked in these stories and they learned as a group how to acknowledge their faults publicly. It was a training for a private avowal face to face with Christ.

Each group went on a pilgrimage to a shrine of Our Lady to pray for a general or a private intention. On the way, they had to write a letter, make collections out of their own pocket-money for the orphans in Korea, compose a prayer of consecration to Our Lady which would be read by the group during the ceremony of « Communion Solennelle, » prepare a « tableau » with texts from the Missal or on an important event in the life of Our Lady. We liked the Catechists to send the children from time to time by themselves into the woods, to think things over, or to say a decade of their Rosary or read certain passages in the Bible, but above all, to make them appreciate the blessing of silence and prayer.

Some relay-games proved extremely popular as for example with the

hymn : « J'ai reçu le Dieu Vivant. » In answer to the question put to them, the children looked up in the Bible the text which inspired the following : « Il m'a dit : ' Je suis le Cep... ' » « He said to me : ' I am the Vine, I am the Lamb, I am Love ' », etc. and this text they recited by heart. Each group had a big Bible at its disposal.

Another similar game was organized by making use of the little drawings in Abbé Thivallier's book : « Jeux de Piste » (Tracking Games), for example, Confirmation, or the Parables. These games are very interesting if they are based on a point of Catechism previously discussed.

Another achievement was the Passion-Play, drawn from the Gospel of Palm-Sunday and followed by a Candle procession in the dark. The candle of each child had been lit from the flame of the big Paschal Candle. We plunged into the darkness like a forest of little lights surrounding four boys carrying a wooden cross which was set up on the top of a hill. That was our night-prayer. We gathered round the Cross and called to mind all our vast missionary intentions, and we concluded by the prayer of the children of the world.

The last day of the retreat was spent in various celebrations in connection with the Paschal Vigil : the theme of the Light and of the Resurrection, illustrated by the Paschal Candle ; the theme of the New Life and the Baptismal Water, by the gestures of the blessing of the Font, a reminder of Baptism, with its triple renunciation and its triple promise (Baptism, Easter, « Communion Solennelle »); and lastly, the theme of the White Garment (the Communion alb).

At the end of the day, there was the Paschal Meal, prepared by all and accompanied by the blessing of the unleavened bread and of the chalice. The Paschal commemoration ended up with the account of the Ascension, Pentecost, the prayer to the Holy Ghost and the gestures of the Ceremony of Confirmation.

Here then is an account of some of the activities which filled the days of the retreat. They will give an idea of the general atmosphere and of the method adopted, not only during the retreat, but at other times during the year, either with Cubs or Brownies or Scouts, or with children preparing for their « Communion Solennelle. »

We cannot lay too much stress on the atmosphere with which Catechesis must be impregnated. Joy and charity are the basic principles which create the true parish outlook.

There is no doubt that, seen in this light, the ceremony of « Communion Solennelle » and of Confirmation should bring the whole parish together. Twice we had the good fortune of having a Missionary Bishop to confirm the children the very day of their « Communion Solennelle. » The Catechist (mothers of families in

the parish), the Scoutmasters and leaders of the Youth Movements are ideal Confirmation sponsors.

However, it is the years following the great event which are crucial. Various suggestions have been tried out in order to keep in contact with the children and the question has been raised by some of the children's mothers. So far, it is the missionary groups working for Korea which have been the most successful. An attempt to form a Bible-reading Club among the young boys of the « Athénée » has not met with the success we hoped for, owing to the lack of tenacity and perseverance chiefly on the parents' side. We then tried to enlist the help of the parents whose children do not attend the School Catechism classes. Would they see that their young people went to the Continuation classes held in the parish after the « Communion Solennelle » and the Confirmation? It was of no avail. In their opinion, two years were amply sufficient and they thought that the children should spend their leisure time learning Swedish gymnastic, dancing, and so forth. It would have been fairly easy to persuade the child; it was impossible to convince the parents, to say nothing of the school which keeps its hand over the children in an exclusive way. The same can be said of colleges and of the « Athénées. »

In such conditions, we find the missionary meetings have given the best results. This was shown in the interest created for Korea which brought so many families together to help in this good work.

It is evident that the religious formation of our Youth should be given further consideration. The matter is urgent. The parish must find a way of getting hold of our young people. They need systematic Catechetical training in these critical years of adolescence and later on in preparation for marriage. What is needed is a general plan of action in the preparation of which all would collaborate, the Diocesan authorities, those responsible for Catholic Education, the Clergy and the families.

APPENDIX

A SPECIMEN OF FIRST YEAR PROGRAMME

(Exod. III, 4).

XVIII. "MOSES, MOSES!" — "I AM HERE, AT THY COMMAND"

(to be taken with the 2nd Sunday in Lent)

- a) *Text for study*: — Gospel of the Transfiguration, p. 94 (petit Missel Féder)
 — the starting point is the dialogue between Moses and Jesus.
 — « Fêtes et Saisons », Moses, p. 3-6.
 Exodus III and IV.

b) *Directions for the Catechist*: During Lent, the account of the Transfiguration is of the utmost importance. Jesus shows Himself, transfigured in the Glory of the Divinity. Two figures appear: Moses and Elias. They converse with Him about the death which He is to undergo at Jerusalem. Moses, representing the Old Law (Passover), stands at the side of Jesus, the God-made-Man of the New Covenant. Together they speak of the second Passover which fulfills that begun when Israel went out of Egypt. What Moses did for his people, who had become the slaves of the Egyptians, Jesus is going to do for all humanity, enslaved by self and by Evil. To each step, to each act accomplished by the Prophet corresponds a similar step or a similar act in the life of Christ. This is what we are going to discover progressively in the various liturgical passages which will take us right up to Easter.

The Call of Moses: « Fêtes et Saisons, » p. 3-5 to be recalled briefly to the children (Exodus I-III).

1. Moses miraculously rescued from the waters.
2. Moses wants for nothing at Pharaoh's Court.
3. The Hebrews reduced to slavery in spite of the promises made by God to Abraham.
4. Moses loves his people. He kills an Egyptian who had beaten one of his brethren, the Hebrews. Moses threatened by Pharaoh's men takes refuge in another country.
5. Moses in the desert. The Burning Bush: GOD.

Dialogue between God and Moses: p. 6 Exodus III.

"Moses looked closer: It seemed that the Bush was alight, yet did not burn." This page is a very important clue for understanding Moses and the entire religious history of the Hebrews. Contrasting strongly with Moses degree of intimacy with Our Lord at the Transfiguration, is his awkwardness on the Sinai. He trembles before God and before the Egyptians. It is important to stress the following details for the children:

1. "And Moses hid his face; he dared not look on the open sight of God." Exodus III, 6.

2. "Up, I have an errand for thee at Pharaoh's Court." Ex. III, 9.
3. "Lord, have patience with me; but all my life I have been a man of little eloquence. I am more faltering, more tongue-tied than ever." Ex. IV, 10.
4. "Who was it that fashioned man's mouth? Who is it that makes a man dumb or deaf or clear-sighted or blind, if not I?" Exod. IV, 11.

About 1. See Transfiguration: the Apostles' reaction, p. 94, Missal.

About 2. The Call of the Apostles:

e.g. St Paul; Missal, p. 356. Acts IX.

e.g. St Andrew — Simon Peter, p. 348. Matt. IV.

c) *Text to learn by heart and copy out*
(basic texts for the children)

"And he was transfigured in their presence, his face shining like the sun and his garments becoming white as snow; and all at once they had sight of Moses and Elias conversing with him." Matt. XVII, 2, 3.

"The Lord called to him from the midst of the Bush: "Moses, Moses." And when he answered: "I am here, at Thy Command," he was told: "Do not come nearer. Rather, take the shoes from thy feet, thou art standing on holy ground. I am the God thy fathers worshipped, the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob." And Moses hid his face; he dared not look on the open sight of God." Exodus III, 4, 5, 6.

d) *Exercises (to be supervised by the Catechist)*

1) *Group-work*: Starting from the account of the Transfiguration: Why was Moses "at home" with God? Why was he His friend? Using the «Fêtes et Saisons» number on Moses, tell the children the first incidents of his childhood and his Call. Bring home to the children that "God needs Moses to carry on the work begun by Abraham. If possible, make the children reproduce the scene themselves:

1. Moses before God.
2. God's heart moved by the great misery of the world.
3. The missionary vocation of Moses.
4. His apprehensions.

What is the attitude of the Disciples during the Transfiguration? What is MY attitude when I pray?

Give another occasion when Jesus was moved (e.g. Jesus among the sick and the sinners).

Have others been "called" as Moses was?

Why did Moses falter? Would YOU be afraid? "I am tongue-tied."

The story of the Call of Moses is more wonderful than any other story (such as Tintin or Spirou) because... (It reveals a man shaken to his very depths by the love of God and of his brethren the Hebrews).

2. *Scripture-book*: Title 18: "Moses, Moses — I am here at thy command"
(Documents in «En marche vers le Christ», p. 7, 9)

— Write down text from book

— Draw

Moses before Jesus transfigured (see Missal).

Moses before the Burning Bush.

— God's order: "I have not been blind to the oppression which my people endures in Egypt. Up, I have an errand for thee at Pharaoh's Court; thou art to lead my people away out of Egypt." Ex. III, 7-10.

— Moses objects: "All my life I have been a man of little eloquence; I am tongue-tied."

— God's answer: "I will be with thee."

How often have I tried to "put God off," by excuses when He asks me something? I lie, I disobey, I do not pray.

Moses, God's friend, and mine, show me how to...

*"Who was it that fashioned man's mouth?"
Yahve.*

- e) *Watchwords for Lent*: — Money-box for Korea: sharing with others.
 — Not to be stubborn like Moses.
 — Falling on one's face: praying with love.
 — Use your Missal for a better prayer (2nd Sunday of Lent).

*"Remember us, O Lord,
Thy People are dear to Thee."*

Adult Catechesis Within the Context of Local Meetings

by Joseph BULCKENS

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The need to consider catechesis as a pastoral work is becoming more and more obvious. Of this the present number of *Lumen Vitae* as well as some recent issues on catechesis are an evident proof.²

Instead of looking upon catechesis as a task incumbent on the priest *parallel* with the celebration of the liturgy and the christianization through charity of the milieu, actually one likes to stress — in view of practical orientations — that catechesis, to be effective, must maintain close and reciprocal links with liturgical life and the apostolate.

The parish priest must not only see that the Word of God reaches the intelligence and heart of the faithful, but also that it gives more life to the liturgical action of the whole parish community and inspires the daily life of Christians according to the divine commandments. The Word of God becomes present in the liturgy. Is not preaching a liturgical act? « It is invitation to the sacraments, invitation to baptism in the missionary kerygma, invitation to the Eucharist in the homily of the Church. »³ The Word of God becomes incarnate in apostolic acts ; catechesis must form « believers

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2. Cfr F. COUDREAU, *Pour un catéchisme spirituel* (pro manuscripto), Québec, Canada, 1955, ch. V.: To catechize, is to accomplish a pastoral work, ff. 180-193. — Cfr P. VERNHET, *Dimensions nouvelles du catéchisme*, Toulouse, 1957. — Cfr L. RÉTIF, *Catéchisme et mission ouvrière*, Collect. Rencontres, n° 31, Paris, 1950.

3. J. DANIELOU, S.J., *Parole de Dieu et Mission de l'Eglise*, in *Le Prêtre ministre de la Parole*, Paris, 1954, p. 45. — Cfr the special number *Bijbel en Liturgie*, in *Tijdschrift voor Liturgie*, 1957. *Parole de Dieu et Liturgie* (Coll. Lex Orandi, n° 25), Paris, 1958.

who live the Christian mystery and testify to it, all of which really only finds its accomplishment in and through the parish. »¹

Consequently, we can say that the parish is a community of catechesis.² The priest proclaims the good news; collaborating with parents and catechists, he takes care of the religious instruction of all. The liturgical community, priests and *circumstantes*, realize the Word of God in the Sacraments, and it is the laity who open up the sphere of the family, of work and of leisure, to the Christian message.

However, the existence of pious associations and specialized Catholic Action invites us to overstep the limits of parish catechesis, to think of catechesis on a diocesan, national and even international level. Rather, let us say ecclesial. For example, during the past years apostolic good works in Belgium have tried to inculcate in their members a yearly religious theme in the different spheres of life according to the respective methods. This catechesis goes beyond the parish structure and we must take it into account.

In any case « an essential condition of the presentation of the Word of God to the world of today is a Church apparent to the world, acting through all the organizations and movements which make up the world's structure. »³

This introduction was needed to assign its right place to an experiment of adult catechesis within the context of local reunions, that is to say, in the context of a parochial organization of Catholic Action. We refer to the family groups which organized themselves a few years ago in the Parish of St. Albert in Brussels. A parish priest and three curates ensure the management of the parish.

In a first paragraph we will give an outline of the organization, spirit and activity of these family groups. In a second, we will concentrate on the catechesis within this movement.

I. THE FAMILY GROUPS⁴

1. *Brief Historical Survey.*

In 1952, the clergy of St. Albert's felt completely overpowered

1. P. VERNHET, *op. cit.*, p. 187. R. MACÉ, in *Lumière et Vie*, n° 35, p. 56-71.

2. L. LOCHET, *The Parish, Community of Catechesis*, in *Lumen Vitae*, vol. XII, p. 427-444.

3. L. LOCHET, *art. cit.*, p. 440.

4. We are following very closely, at times literally, the duplicated texts of the charter drawn up by the Abbés Jean PLISSART and Joseph SWINNEN, actually parish priest and curate of the parish St. Albert at Schaerbeek (Brussels).

and realized the absolute impossibility of approaching and keeping in touch with the 5,000 homes within the parish. If every Sunday 3,000 Christians were gathered around the altar and the pulpit, it was grievous to note that the great majority of parishioners no longer heard the Word of God and no longer lived the mysteries of Christ. The clergy also noted that the practising Christians were indeed a community of faith and worship, but that a true and vital community of charity did not exist. These Christians living in a populous part of a big city, tainted with individualism and a spirit of liberalism, themselves felt quite incapable, individually, of radiating Christianity in their own district. There were many Christians, and fervent ones occupied in good works in the parish, living in its streets, but their presence did not question seriously the unbelievers.

It was then that the clergy asked a few families, neither better nor worse than the others, to build up slowly a community of Christian charity and to begin with their own street. They were to be concerned about their « neighbour, » get to know him if possible, say good-morning, offer and ask for small services, in a word, take him to heart. It would be a long and exacting job. This was a significant hour for the laity of St. Albert's. The duty of families is, therefore, primarily apostolic. By endeavouring to live their marriage, which is a sacrament of love, fecundity and holiness, to the full, these families will become witnesses of Christ in their own district and will give others food for thought. Through their prayer, their knowledge and their active and discreet love of their street neighbours, by sharing the latter's joys and sorrows, they will be their apostles and ferment. Through Christian charity, which always keeps an eye open for the spiritual, material and religious needs of others, they will try to get into conversation with tepid Christians and unbelievers. These families first of all try to discover the other active members of good works in their street and maintain particularly close ties of friendship and collaboration with them.

In order to help families to meet and get to know the inhabitants of the same street — we must not forget that this experiment is taking place in a large city — they are given regularly definite « missions » to carry out in their district, as this helps to contact neighbours. For instance : on the day of Exposition and on Maundy Thursday parishioners come to pray to Our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament. The families make a personal call on their Christian neighbours to ask them to represent their street at a given hour in the church. This move, taken in 1958, trebled the attendance of parishioners at the Adoration. With a view to the festivity « Cocktail 1900 » which is organized for all parishioners over 65,

the families distributed invitations on the part of the Clergy by placing them in the letter-boxes a fortnight in advance and, a few days later, they called personally for the answers. In this way 300 persons, many of which were non-practising or irregular in their religious duties, were reached. The same work of contacting was effected for the day of the blessing of all the children of the parish, etc.

2. The Means Used.

Counting on itself, one family could not easily acquire, diffuse and maintain this spirit of charity ; and so it asks for the aid of other families without regard for age or social standing, but animated with the same ideal. Together they make an association of prayer, work, and spiritual and material assistance. From the parish clergy, the family expects a supplement of religious formation, animation and advice on the needs of the district. In exchange, it gives the moral support of effective aid. The family knows that in its action and that of the group, everything derives from the Church and goes back to it. There it is nourished by Christ so that in turn it should nourish others in order that they should come to Him. That is why personal and family prayer and the frequentation of the sacraments become more and more familiar.

3. Organization.

The families organize themselves into groups of 4 to 8 homes, under the guidance of one responsible family. Actually, there are about 50 to 60 families divided up into 8 groups who « work » 8 of the parish districts. Altogether the clergy aims at establishing 15 groups for the 15 geographical entities of the parish. Frequent removals, however, seriously hinder recruitment. The group meets under the direction of the leading family, which is established ' prime mover ' for the year, in one or other home, of an evening, at least every six weeks. In several of the groups, the habit of taking a meal together, for which each one brings provisions, is much appreciated. The family finds in the group, advice, encouragement and strength for its apostolate, aid for the interior life and protection against inertia. It first learns to love within its group. It is a duty for both partners to attend the meetings. For the occasion, children are entrusted to the care of parents, neighbours, friends or single ladies.

When the responsible families are gathered together, each one brings the result of its own experiences and puts forward suggestions, deriving from the whole its own schooling. In order to avoid stagna-

tion and routine, the movement is continually being remodelled by the pilot group which is composed of the clergy and 4 families. This pilot group gives the impetus, watches over the progress of the groups, looks after the spread of the movement, prepares the general assembly and the annual retreat and represents the movement before the outside world.

If the families give witness to charity in circles with which the priest cannot always make direct contact, priests must be witnesses of charity in respect of the families. That is why this work is not the concern of one priest only, but of the entire clergy, parish priest and curates. Good understanding between the members of the clergy is one of the main sources of inspiration of the families. There is therefore no established chaplain for this or that group. Each priest in turn attends the meeting of a group. This supposes close collaboration between the members of the clergy. The priest is not in charge of the reunion, but he is its spiritual guide.

4. *Plan of the Meeting.*

Prayer. The family group takes its time over this : it is the best moment of the reunion and aims at teaching us how to pray, how to become a prayerful community. It is this which gives the meeting its true atmosphere. Led by the welcoming family, it starts with a spontaneous prayer or a meditation taken from the Gospels or the liturgy by both members of this family. It blossoms out in a prayer of thanksgiving, adoration, in a request for forgiveness and for the intentions of all those present. This ends with the prayer of the priest in his rôle of mediator.

Spiritual Exchange : see below, paragraph 2.

Field of Action : the district :

— Sharing in common is the barometer of the movement's spirit. The aim of the family group is to create a Christian community in the district, to enliven it and bring others to join in by their own example and that of the community. Charitable, patient, bold, tenacious and yet humble and discreet, the Family's example will be contagious. Here, the evidence given, the spontaneous gestures, the accounts of missions undertaken, are approached in all simplicity and sincerity. The effort is made shoulder to shoulder, possible exaggerations are corrected, sleepy-heads roused, advice and enlightenment sought, imaginations vie with each other, aptitudes are brought to light and negligences apologized for. Sharing everything in common is therefore the principal and permanent mission of the Families.

— The missions. Families sometimes receive specific « missions » to accomplish in their streets. We have already mentioned these.

Conclusion. The family group parts with added incentive after a short prayer and a hymn, or the recitation of Compline. The priest's blessing calls down the grace of God on the resolutions taken.

II. ADULT CATECHESIS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL REUNIONS

Apostolic works are more than ever in need of an adapted catechesis. The Christian is not meant to bring his views to bear on the world, but those of Christ. The families called upon to re-christianize their district apply the method advocated by Catholic Action movements ; see, judge and act. The immediate environment will pronounce judgment in the name of Christian doctrine, the knowledge of which increases as new problems occur.

Family groups, actually, are asked first of all to be shining examples, not so much as individual Christians, but as husbands and wives, as families. That is why matrimonial and family problems demand a great deal of investigation. Christian doctrine will therefore be studied with a special end in view : that of the incarnation of Christianity within matrimonial and family life. The world has greater need than ever of genuine examples of home life, and the family groups are called upon to exercise an apostolic action on all those living in the same street. Militant Christians must always be ready to hear the Word of God in order to broadcast and diffuse the light of faith on the human problems of their sphere of life, that is to say, on all the elements which influence the behaviour of the inhabitants of a specific district.

Family groups try to meet their neighbours in the same street : these people have and spread a conception of the meaning of life, love, family, chastity, God, the Church, the priest, money, work, suffering and leisure. It is the groups who should bring the Christian answer, the truth of which will become evident thanks to their real and obvious charity. If Christians listen to the Word of God in Church, militant families must think it over in groups, to put it into practice, with a view to reaching their objectives.

At each of the group meetings, half an hour is set aside for spiritual exchange. In fact, this often stretches to three-quarters of an hour.

1. Method.

The families wish to compare their ways of thinking and acting with those of Our Lord. To do this, they employ two methods. They begin with their own problems and the solutions they have found and then look up what Our Lord says. Or else, taking the teaching of the Bible on one or other matter, they examine how they can put this into effect in their own lives. The families prepare this spiritual exchange two by two and passivity of mind is not tolerated. However, it is desirable that the welcoming family together with the priest thoroughly investigate the subject proposed and help the others to come better prepared to the evening meeting. As the case occurs, they will send a questionnaire a few days beforehand, to facilitate reflection, indicating the biblical passages to meditate on, or a chapter of some special book to read, or else an account of experiences made on one or other point.

2. The Choice of Subjects.

Several methods have been tried. Certain groups make their own choice of a subject for the next meeting, rather in accordance with the desires of the families. Three years ago, at the request of several groups, the clergy proposed a definite set of subjects among which the families made a selection.

We take the liberty of quoting from the schemas of the stencilled circular :

Marriage :

- 1) the Sacrament : the ritual of marriage.
 - 2) evolution and growth of matrimonial love.
 - 3) fecundity : — how this should be understood
— control or regularization of births
— conjugal morality.
 - 4) God and the home.
- This is given as an exposé followed by a debate.

The Prayer of families :

- is it reserved for religious ?
- when and how to carry it out ?
- what time should be given to it ?
- how should one do it ?
- what are the difficulties encountered ?
- what prevents us making it ?

Family Liturgy :

1° what is to be found therein :

- a teaching
- an atmosphere
- religious acts : which ones ?

2° the rôle of parents in this connection.

3° criticism of some attempt (article) or of one's own experiences.

4° liturgy : how to live it in the family (example : preparing the Sunday Mass).

The Sacraments.

How to live them oneself and bring one's neighbours and children to live them too. (Sacrament of the sick ; when a child is born ; the occasion of Solemn Communion, etc.)

Scripture.

1) One of the books of the Bible is chosen. Men and women all read over two or three chapters of this book during the month preceding the meeting. At the actual meeting, each one tells quite simply what has particularly attracted his attention. One family leads the debate.

2) The group decides to study, for instance in the Gospel of St. Luke, what Our Lord says and reveals concerning suffering, faith, charity, detachment from self, Himself, His Father, apostolate, prayer, mercy.

Each one is allotted some part of the Gospel of St. Luke to read, different from that of the others. At the next meeting St. Luke is once more taken up as the basis of some other idea. Each one then reads some other part.

3) Another passage of the Gospel is studied ; everyone prepares it ; example : the knavish steward, etc.

Debate on some specific book.

For example : Voillaume : « Au Cœur des Masses. »

Caffarel : « Le Mariage est un Sacrement. »

Each family within the group obtains the book chosen and everyone reads a specific chapter in the course of the month preceding the meeting.

The family designated starts the debate and keeps it going by means of questions. It encourages each one to give his opinion and his eventual resolutions.

The Mass.

The group decides to find in the Ordinary of the Mass those prayers and gestures which express and underline :

- the offering : who is offering ? to whom ? what is being offered ?

- thanksgiving,
- the forgiveness of sins,
- the glorification of the Trinity,
- the sanctification of the faithful, etc.

Each one will live his Mass with this idea in view during the preceding month and will note the passages to bring them up on the day of the meeting.

During the earlier years, the family groups showed a preference for spiritual exchanges on marriage, family and conjugal prayers and for the study of the Bible. To help out these exchanges, we have often had recourse to the excellent numbers of the « *Anneau d'Or.* »

In later months, a new orientation has been preferred. A series of subjects on a specific theme is proposed and insisted upon. The definite opinion being that a thorough investigation of the same theme by all the family groups is more advantageous. The creation of a general trend of thought in the parish community, leading to the same specific objective, for instance, the Community Mass, family prayers, confession, apostolic zeal, etc., will favourably influence the activity of each group. In this manner a special mission could be prepared through an adapted catechesis. In any case it is absolutely necessary to find some sort of order and a programme.¹ Finally, the clergy will be better able to prepare the spiritual exchange if all the groups have studied the same subject.

The following fact had some bearing on this new type of orientation. A few months ago, the clergy had asked some of the family groups to find out together the essential point of Christianity. The results were surprising, the answers put forward varied considerably and for the most part did not touch on the essentials of Christianity. This experience made us realize the need for regularly giving an over-all view of certain doctrines and even of Christianity as a whole.

3. *Object of the Spiritual Exchanges.*

This spiritual exchange has a threefold aim which prevents it from deteriorating into futile discussion.

1. The frequent moves in town thin out the family groups; but the extension services tries to fill the gaps and build-up new groups. Consequently, it will always be necessary to take up again the basic themes such as matrimonial problems, family prayers, the apostolic zeal for neighbours, etc. for the new arrivals in the groups.

1) The groups try to really understand the spiritual value of the revealed doctrine on one specific point : suffering, marriage, priesthood, confession. Christian behaviour is guided by the knowledge of Christian religion. In any case, the surrounding environment sets problems and the faithful must be able to answer these questions and counter the difficulties. Consequently, they will endeavour to see how they can make the whole parish understand this doctrine ; for instance, when studying the Sacrament of the Sick, the groups will examine how they can bring their neighbours to ask for this sacrament when gravely sick.

2) The spiritual exchange never limits itself to the sphere of knowledge. The families help each other to discover how the doctrine of Christ becomes embodied in the lives of parents, husbands and wives. They pool their experiences in order to make progress. The study of prayer, for instance, has given rise to good resolutions concerning family and conjugal prayers.

3) Finally, families always show the greatest interest when they study how best to collaborate in teaching the matter under discussion to their children of various ages. How should children be educated in accordance with the Christian outlook on charity, suffering, etc. ? The problem of children's sex-education is also one of their major preoccupations.

At the following meeting, families give an account of their efforts and share their experiences.



Adult catechesis is today a matter of urgency. Sermons transmit the Christian message. Within meetings of specialized apostolic works, militant Christians meditate on the yearly religious themes to try to bring these into the various spheres of work, to christianize the independent classes, the rural population, the working class. Through the catechesis in the meetings of family groups, parishioners try to live their matrimonial and family life according to Christian doctrine and give witness thereto in their own street, thus proclaiming the Word of God in their district and transforming a city parish into a community of charity.

A Parish Experiment in Adult Catechesis

by Jean Buys, S. J.

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The experiment to which we refer was carried out in the parish of St. Anthony of Padua, in the little town of Ostuni, diocese of Brindisi in Southern Italy, by a most zealous and imaginative priest, Mgr. Giuseppe Aléo.

We are basing ourselves on the figures of the year 1958 which was not the first of this experiment. The facts are recorded in two large registers and a substantial relation which Mgr. Aléo has had the kindness to lend the present writer.

The parish priest of St. Anthony of Padua came to his parish about twenty years ago, when he was approximately thirty years old. For a long time he led his flock and preached the Gospel in the usual manner, but, above all, he studied his people. He was struck by the fact that though attendance is in general better in rural parishes and small towns than in big industrial cities, there is no great difference in the religious knowledge of the people. Starting from this idea and not realizing where it would lead him, Mgr. Aléo began to observe his parish. He set in order and classified his observations and though lacking any previous training in religious sociology — this science being as yet unexplored at the time of his studies — he rediscovered by himself certain of its elementary principles. After having carefully examined the structure of his parish he had a large map made which covers entirely one of the walls of the Parish Bureau. The streets and houses are marked out by means of different colours and signs according to the different social classes, professions, church attendance, etc.

Professional sociologists would undoubtedly and rightly think that the local method used could be improved upon, but, and this is an interesting point, in the practical impossibility of having recourse to specialists, of whom the very existence was probably unknown a

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few years ago at Ostuni, Mgr. Aléo adapted himself to a concrete situation and, with the means at hand, he attained the end in view, that is — as complete a knowledge as possible of the characteristics of the flock entrusted to his pastoral care.

The human aspect of the parish is as follows : number of inhabitants, 325 ; adults (15 years old and over) 2245, among which boys and men number 1050 ; married women or widows, 885 ; girls 310. Number of families 839, which subdivide into : agricultural workers 55 %, artisans and working-class 24 % ; professional class and black-coated workers 8 % ; landowners, small shopkeepers and miscellaneous 15 %.

Mgr. Aléo carried his statistical effort much further, examining with great precision how in each category the various types of occupation are divided. For instance, the qualification of married woman was not, of itself, very precise. Was this married woman a worker herself, or did she follow a profession at home or outside... ? Ostuni's parish priest has given the answer to all these questions and the information he has collected has allowed him to build-up a plan of evangelization of his parish which takes into account all the real needs.

But it is not enough that the parish priest should be convinced of the need for a serious, systematic religious teaching, adapted to the various categories of listeners, it is also necessary for the listeners themselves to share this conviction.

Mgr. Aléo took his time. He began by working upon public opinion. For months, in his sermons, conversations, daily contacts with the parishioners, he insisted on one idea to the point of giving the impression he was obsessed by it, that Christians should really know the elements of their faith better.

When public opinion had been sufficiently prepared by this insistence, Mgr. Aléo organized, with some of the laity, special « days » on which the subject was discussed « ex professo. » The result was that at the close of these « days, » each of the 839 families of the parish received a leaflet making known the wishes expressed and the practical conclusions envisaged. Then the plan which meanwhile had taken shape and matured in the mind of the priest, but which he had carefully kept to himself in order to divulge it simultaneously with the wishes of the parishioners, was brought to light.

A Council for the presidency of Adult Catechetical School was appointed. The various charges, presidency, vice-presidency, secretariate and treasurership were entrusted to active laymen convinced of the importance of these tasks. There was, therefore, one single council, but with a man president and a woman president, a vice-

president of each sex, etc., this constitutes a General Staff. The subordinate staff for recruiting and propaganda was made-up of leaders and sub-leaders of groups, at the rate of one leader or sub-leader for every 15 to 20 persons of the same category. Thus in 1958 there were 158 group-leaders : 64 for the married women and widows' section, 26 for that of girls and 68 for men and boys. Each group-leader received a small register in which to note the names, addresses and characteristics of those in his care, and who lived in the same part of the parish as he did. This register had to be kept up to date with a record of attendances or absenteeism from lessons, and in the latter case the reasons had to be ascertained and entered in the register, for it is these motives which have made it possible to establish the statistics to which we will refer in the course of this article.

The Council, with the help of the group-leaders, decides each year on the most favourable period for opening the Adult Catechism classes. This period can fluctuate within a matter of weeks with regard to meteorological conditions, as we are dealing with a predominantly agricultural population, but it must take place in the first quarter of the secular year, between Christmas and Easter. In order to retain its intensive character which is the salient feature of this experiment, the course must be uninterrupted for at least two months and a half. It is held every day except Sundays and holidays.

It is not necessary for the three categories of courses (women's, girls' and men's) to start on the same date, as the beginning of each series may be subject to different conditions. But whatever the date of opening of the group, it is given great solemnity with the Mass of the Holy Spirit, to which each parishioner able to assist is invited by personal letter.

In 1958, the courses for married women and for girls started on February 2nd and ended on April 2nd, after fifty lessons, so that every working-day had its lesson. The men's course started on February 23rd and closed down on April 3rd, after 32 lessons. As these courses are given every day at 3 p. m. for women, 6 p. m. for girls and 8 p. m. for men, it can be seen how hard the parish priest has to work during these months, knowing that, with rare exceptions, he takes all the classes himself.

The premises used are a local hall. The church itself is rarely used, and then the Blessed Sacrament is removed. The priest explains doctrine and each one is allowed to interrupt and ask for enlightenment or put forward objections. In this way the lessons often take the form of debates.

In an article in the *Rivista del Clero Italiano* of September 1958, Dom Lino Baracco of the Milan Sacred Heart University, relating the Ostuni experiment remarked, very pertinently, that this method had three characteristics : first of all, each category assembles a great number of participants ; it adopts the form of a dialogue lesson lasting an hour ; finally, its intensiveness, a daily course of over two and a half months, gives it a unique force of penetration. Don Baracco, present at Ostuni in the very middle of the course, remarked that the parish streets about the time of the lessons, had the typical appearance of the approach of great solemnities. It can be said without exaggeration, he adds, that during sixty to seventy days, the most important event in the life of this community is the Catechetical School.

The syllabus elaborated by Mgr. Aléo in 1958, the Marian Year, gave a large part to mariology, but also dealt with the Mass, the social doctrine of the Church, and preparation for Holy Week, ending with an exegetic and historic study of the Passion.

The results were really encouraging as will be shown by the following figures. Thanks to the control exercised by the group-leaders and the fatherly reminders he sent to absentees, Mgr. Aléo obtained a steady attendance at the classes.

Out of 1050 men and boys enrolled, 350 (32 %) followed the course regularly ; 395 (37 %) were not able to do so but had good excuses ; and 325 (31 %) were absent without good reasons. Among the married women and widows the inscriptions numbered 885 ; 383 (43 %) were regular ; 434 (49 %) were irregular for good reasons, and only 68 (8 %) were absent without good motives. Out of 310 girls enrolled ; 154 (49 %) followed the course steadily ; 96 (30 %) were legitimately unable to do so, and 60 (21 %) were absent without good reasons.

It must be added that a catechesis at home was organized for the sick ; while the legitimate absentees were gathered together twice a month, as far as possible, in some private house, by the parish priest.

Obviously, it is not possible to assess the results of this pastoral action of the parish priest of St. Anthony's of Ostuni. Grace works in a hidden way within hearts. But by referring to the figures of the previous years, it was possible to ascertain a definite improvement in the observance of Easter duties. In 1958 the following, extremely heartening figures were recorded : 95 % of the married women, 98 % of the girls and 72 % of the men and boys. Even for Southern Italy, these figures are very high. It would be in-

teresting to compare them, if possible, with those of nearby parishes, all sociological conditions being equal.

Whatever might be the results of this comparison, Mgr. Aléo's initiative deserves to be known. His greatest merit appears to us to be that of having restored to its proper place this most essential task of a parish priest, the teaching of his flock. Too often, it must be admitted, and many priests complain of it, charitable works take up so much time that they make it almost impossible to accomplish this task. Mgr. Aléo put it in the foreground of his preoccupations and realizations, and he has most successfully solved this long standing conflict by bringing to the help of a genuine pastoral zeal an excellent methodical and organizing ability. This is the secret of his success, for as His Eminence Cardinal Siri said, and Don Baracco quotes the remark in the article in the *Rivista* mentioned above : « Parishes entrusted to enthusiasts soon go down, while those led by methodical minds go forward. »

An Experience of Parochial Catechesis in a Canadian Rural District

by Bernard PAPILLON, C.R.I.C.

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A small parish in the Canadian countryside made up of a hundred or so Catholic families,² and about fifty non-Catholic ones,³ has endeavoured to realize the total « Catechesis » described by the Very Reverend Father Louis de Peretti.

I. BEGINNINGS

1. *Within the Structure of Social Evolution.*

It can be stated that this parish was absolutely virgin soil with regard to any attempt of this nature. The pastoral effort unfolded itself within the old-established, elaborated and proven structures of the past three hundred years, which could be described as « pre-urban. »

We know how, within the last decades, the development of large towns, of industrialization and mechanization, the many possibilities of escape, the growing requirements of modern life have on all sides burst the bounds of iron-clad social traditions.

Despite its relative distance from the main centres, our parish has not escaped this evolution. The need for facing the problem and undertaking the building-up of new structures in the pastoral sphere was therefore urgent.

2. *Local Problems.*

But it was equally necessary to consider the state of the parish at the

1. After Classical Studies at the Junior Seminary at Avignon, Reverend Father PAPILLON was Professor there for a year. He then did his philosophy and theology at the Scholasticate of St. Joseph of Ecluse in la Drôme, teaching for another year in the Juniorate of that house. Since the foundation made in Canada by the Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception ten years ago, he has been rector of the parish of St. Mary Mediatrix, at Brigham, Quebec. He has had an excellent opportunity of coming in contact with the suburbs of Lyons, during a year spent as Curate there. — Address: Canons Regular, 21 Via Frederico Torre, Rome, ITALY (Editor's Note).

2. About 500 souls, almost French speaking.

3. Mostly Protestants and speaking English.

time of taking over. There were obstacles to overcome, but also very sound bases for a catechetical revival.

If the final aim of all «Catechesis» is to «bring the Christian mystery to life» and if, to achieve this, it is necessary to build-up «a community of prayer, charity and life,» it was to be expected that there would be many obstacles in the achievement.

a. *Obstacles to the Community.* — The greatest obstacle to the formation of the Christian Community was a highly accentuated individualism ; within the village, manifestations of pettiness and jealousy between many families ; in the country-side, the isolation of families who only met on very rare occasions.

Other obstacles, of a more materialistic order, barred the way to unity and made the organization of a community difficult : the parish territory was divided up into five school municipalities, and four ordinary municipalities ; the instability of several agriculturists incapable of settling down on one farm ; the absence of a local factory which would allow those not wanted on the land to earn their living.... This contributed to the triumph of the centrifugal force on a soil ill-adjusted to the administrative, social and school realities. The school problem alone seems to have arrived at a measure of solution ; a central school (now being built) will be able to receive at the opening of the school-year (1959-60) the greater number of children of the parish.

b. *Obstacles to the Life.* — In the usual course of life and in the participation to the Christian mystery, we could point to these : routine ; Sundays and feastdays, the faithful are present at Mass, but there is no participation ; Holy Communion is given before and after the Masses ; Baptisms are conferred without preparation, without explanation, without any attempt on the part of the parish community to take a share in the ceremony ; rather too much importance is given to minor devotions ; the accent is too much on a morality severed from doctrine, leading to a faith based on the authority of the priests but not sufficiently enlightened ; insistence on quantity rather than quality.

c. *Favourable Conditions.* — If it was necessary to describe the negative aspects of the situation, it would not be fair to omit the positive ones. We have spoken of an unenlightened faith, but not of an extinguished faith. It is even surprising to note the survival of a deep-rooted faith, due, among other things, to the constant presence of a priest in the midst of the population, to a family life which has not lost its good traditions. «Make one's religion» is part of the social structure.

The result is that on Sundays and Holidays of Obligation the attendance at Mass is very large. To a great extent, this can be accounted for by routine, passivity, the gregarious instinct ; but all the same it is an immense advantage to be able to «get to work» upon a congregation which is on the spot and which counts it an honour to give first place to religion !

This, we hope, gives a sufficient survey of the starting-point. We now have to recount, in broad outlines, the progress made.

II. CATECHESIS AND FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

To create from the start a parish «community,» indispensable condition for a truly ecclesial life, where should we begin? The priest first concerned himself with the *children*, contacting them on a hundred and one occasions, in the street, in the schools, at meetings organized on every possible opportunity, in the course of a variety of tasks entrusted to one or other child, at outings arranged with the help of parents during the summer holidays.

Through the children it became easy to gain access to the *families*. Frequent visits to the homes gave the priest an opportunity to show that he was not only interested in children but in family problems too. The objective, explicitly stated or not, was their orientation towards the parish, towards the church, especially their active participation in the Mass and, generally, in sacramental life.

At the same time the general trend of ideas was being given through *preaching*. In the beginning this specially insisted on the union of individuals and families in charity, on the need for mutual understanding and co-operation, and for welcoming new families in an apostolic spirit.

Gradually, as contacts between the priest and families increased, other possibilities arose: for grouping *children* (Eucharistic Crusade with themes centred on the Church, the parish, preparation for the future...); for *youths* and *girls*, invited to come to periodical meetings in which talks, debates, etc. were organized (Study Circles). A fixed prejudice had to be overcome: «Young people here have never been capable of doing anything, and they never will.» As for many other things, one had to row against the current of the adults' negative and stolid attitude.

Very soon, boys and girls had their movements, called the «*Vaillants*» and «*Vaillantes*.» The priest particularly tackled their juvenile problems and tried to lead them on to higher things, introducing them to a true unaffected prayer, to the desire for a better knowledge of religion and an alert apostolic spirit.

As for *adults*, a certain number were inscribed — I insist on the word — in the Third Order of St. Francis. The least that can be said is that it was singularly lacking in vitality. «Tertiary,» «League of the Sacred Heart,» «Dames of Ste Anne,»... all these are part of a traditional parish. It is the accepted thing to belong to one or other such confraternity. But, here in any case, those who fulfilled their obligations were few and far between.

To create and develop among them a parish community spirit, Parents Meetings were arranged from time to time, and the conversation centred around the children's education and school problems.

This effort, paralysed by the absorbing care for organizing the young, was discontinued. (But it is now more than ever the order of the day and a whole movement is launched to make adults aware of their responsibilities in the parish community and in their social circle.)

III. CATECHESIS AND LIFE OF THE CHURCH

While investigating the problems of the «life,» we are not leaving behind those of the «Community.» They are inseparable and correlated to each other. Speaking of Community is in effect speaking of «Charity.» And speaking of charity is talking of cohesive force, factor of union as well as source of expansion and activity. Charity is the first and the supreme manifestation of **Life** in God and in the humanity created to His image and redeemed in the Blood of His Son. To «Catechize» that is to say, to live and bring the Christian mystery to life, will be to live the love of God and to respond to it personally. In the divine plan, this can only be done in and through the Church.

1. *Catechesis, the Work of Religious Instruction.*

As regards catechesis in our parish, we first undertook the work of *teaching* within the development of an *active pedagogy*, «the very life of an experience» lived «with all the supernatural transformation it entails.»

Teaching, which is not the whole of catechesis but is an «integral part,» played its rôle from the very beginnings.

Preaching, as we stated above, aimed first at showing the benefits of union between the members of one parish family. But at the same time it endeavoured to bring out what in the *Liturgy of the Word and of Praise*, was a source of life. The Gospel, in particular, was explained; the Word of God placed in evidence with a care that it should penetrate the life of each one, with his own troubles, problems, influences and often the imperative necessities of the milieu.

From time to time, there was a *Celebration of the Word* outside the Mass: on the vigil of a main feast, of a Sunday; preparatory half-hour to the Mass of a First Friday...

Through *diaconal monitions* the meaning of the various elements of the Mass and of celebrations was defined and briefly explained.

From the earliest days, Vespers were introduced on Sunday evenings, sung in Latin by the clergy and the faithful, each psalm and each part being preceded by an explanation. But Vespers in Latin were gradually superseded by «Sunday Evening Service» in French, ending with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in which alone, the «*Tantum Ergo*» is now sung in Latin.

The Saturday evening *Rosary* long remained in favour. But to avoid

the ubiquitous pass-words, the monitor commented the main elements of the next day's Mass between each decade.

Eventually, the Rosary to became a « Celebration of the Word, » and this in turn may transform itself into a preparation more adequately fitted to the coming Sunday Mass.

The catechetical point of these various liturgical celebrations would have miscarried if the faithful had not been asked to take an *active participation* therein. This effort has been kept up for the last ten years and has led to a very promising result for the future.

There was first a necessary period of groping and preparation during which *Sung Masses* (in Latin) predominated. The faithful ensured the singing of the various responses to the celebrant's invitations, and the Ordinary.

We are now in the second stage, characterized by the adoption *Mass read with « solemnity, »* and by frequent *celebrations of the Word*, which allow for the use of French.

The songs of Gelineau, Deiss, Julien, etc., contribute largely to the assimilation of an adapted repertory. This is far from being sufficiently comprehensive for the faithful, and the choice of prayers cannot correspond on each occasion with the text of the Mass. New elements are introduced periodically, for the entry, the meditation, the Communion and the ending, as well as for the Ordinary. In a few years, each period of the Liturgical year will have its own fairly large repertory. Selection of psalms and various hymns will soon be at the disposal of the faithful, who will be able to use them as often as they wish. Biblical extracts are read aloud in French, and the Gospel is always followed by a short homily on week days ; on Sundays and feastdays this is longer.

Is not this procedure a first-class pedagogical manner of imparting doctrine, of propounding the meaning of the Word of God, an invitation to live the Christian mystery ?

The priest visits each school in the village and surrounding countryside once a week, not to teach the « *catechism* », this is left to the schoolmaster or mistress, nor to give memory tests, but to communicate the sense of the sacred, of the development of that life transmitted by the Word of God, of the Mass and the other Sacraments, and also to enkindle in children the desire for an apostolic life. Our life as *child of God*, the great mysteries, the Church, the parish... are always the specially chosen subjects, while the preparation of Feasts, liturgical times, Sundays, Mass and the Sacraments predominate.

On a larger and more developed scale, the various youth meetings and reunions are the occasion for imparting light and obtaining reactions in the way of deeper religious convictions and an effective totally Christian way of living.

The *sick and the aged*, suffering members of the Mystical Body, always have the greatest share in the priest's ministry. He visits them often and endeavours to give them an understanding of the redemptive meaning of their physical and moral pains.

2. *Sacramental Life.*

But this teaching, however indispensable, cannot account for a total catechesis. We must penetrate inside and enter upon realizations within the domain of sacramental life.

Convinced that there is no sacrament without the *Bishop*, « indispensable medium of life, of the sacerdotal life of Christians, 'regale sacerdotium,' » the priest devoted himself to the task of developing, in a very simple manner adapted to the faithful, a theology of the episcopate ; an appreciation of the « hierarchical grace of the Bishop. » Concretely, the parishioners prepare his official visit which takes place every three years to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation. His framed photograph, the Bishop's personal gift, can be seen in nearly every home.

It must be admitted that in this line of thought a great deal remains to be done.

The priest in charge of the parish is fully conscious that the work begun will only be « perfected » when the Christian people will at last have learnt to drink deep of this source of sacerdotal and perfect life, the BISHOP.

A parish is implicitly watered at this source when participation in the *sacraments* develops within it.

Participation in the *Mass*, sacrifice and sacrament, summit of the life of the Church, therefore of the life of the parish, was the priest's greatest concern right from the start. We have already spoken of the part taken by the congregation in the Liturgy of the Word.

But, in a far greater degree, the *sacrificial liturgy* has been the subject of an insistent and persevering catechesis, which it is most important to insensify, seeing that the offering of Christ and of his Church in the act of consecration, is the centre of the life of the Christian assembly. It is more and more necessary to obtain, from the members of the assembly at this phase of the Mass, an active silence, and not the stolid mute passivity which adds nothing to the life of a Christian.

As participation in the Sacrifice is completely achieved only by *communion* to the Body and Blood of the Lord, divine nourishment given at the Eucharistic banquet, the priest has succeeded in making the faithful understand that communion — except in special cases — should be received liturgically after the communion of the celebrant.

The Eucharist is the final attainment of Christian initiation. *Baptism* is its first stage. It tends to become a truly communal act to which the parishioners are invited when the family gives sufficient notice to the priest. It is less and less that poor little ceremony, vaguely followed by the godfather and godmother, the father and the child-bearer, who leave without having felt any of the profundity of this magnificent event.

As to *Confirmation*, second stage of initiation, it gives the opportunity to recall to adults — more than to the six or seven year-olds receiving Confirmation — the requirements of their lives of children of God : to

be Christians fully aware of their religious personalities, conscious of the rôle they must take in the ecclesial community, animated by a radiant faith. What efforts are still needed, what patience, before this parish finds in its midst a laity animated with a deep spiritual life and a profound sense of the needs of the Church !

It has also been necessary to bring out the communal meaning of the *Sacraments of Penance*. As the penitent isolates himself, this is a difficult task. On several occasions, the priest recalled that the confessor is not a bestower of absolutions, but a representative of the Church and of the Christian Community. It is before the Church that the Christian comes, to beg that she will re-admit him into the bosom of the parochial community, or for the grace of a greater purification, making him more worthy to participate in the life of the community.

The *Sacrament of Matrimony* has been the opportunity of bringing to several homes a better Christian preparation, but this is as yet very imperfect. The parish has no family which really takes to heart the good of the other families, of their way of living, of the entire parish. We would not deny, however, that several give the example of a truly religious life and show an understanding of the meaning of family life well above the average.

The *Sacrament of the Sick* aims at being a true family and parochial catechesis. In case of danger, it is very rare that the priest is not called in time, very rare that the sick person or the family dreads the arrival of the priest. All are aware of the normal effects of this sacrament ; cure of the body, peace and tranquillity of soul.... What is still lacking is the organizing of catechetical means with a view to bringing out the symbolism of the oil of the sick and the sacramental consequences of the anointing.

IV. LENT 1959

All this putting into effect of catechesis had never as yet been expressed in « programmes » or fixed on paper. The theological idea behind this experience had never taken systematic shape.

This past Lent became the occasion of a synthesis, definite and forceful, for a live and vital theology of the Church, presiding over the choice of « catechetical » means, intended to deeply stir up the parish.

Here is the plan of this Lent. It can serve as model for other periods of the Liturgical Year.

The central theme : « *The Paschal Mystery, Mystery of Our Salvation.* »

Theme for the 1st week : « We are all sinners »....

Theme for the 2nd week : « We are delivered »....

Theme for the 3rd week : « We are redeemed »....

Theme for the 4th week : « We are victorious »....

Theme for the 5th week : « through Christ, Dead and Ressuscitated. »

The doctrine of salvation is the subject : of commentaries and homilies during the Masses and Celebrations ; of doctrinal exposition in our vigils of «rangs» (in the countryside) and in the village, and when the priest visits the schools.

Evidently, the Masses said were none other than those of Lent. The method used was that of the Mass «solemnly» read out. This seems to be a first class pedagogical way of inculcating doctrine, explaining the meaning of the Word of God, inviting the congregation to live the Christian mystery, and putting it progressively in possession of a fairly complete repertory of sacred songs corresponding to the various parts of the Mass : psalms, words taken from the Scriptures and put to music, texts drawn from the best traditions of the Church.

On three days of the week an evening Mass facilitated the participation of the faithful.

Two vigils of district per week have made it possible to cover the whole parish in the course of the first four weeks in Lent. Besides doctrinal explanations, each assembly included a performance of song records, as far as possible those used at Mass, and lantern slides of photos taken in the parish ; general directions and exchange of views on the life, the events and the activities of the parish.

A similar programme, adapted to the schools, formed the basis of their meetings (one per week in each of the four parish schools).

A thorough preparation for the Paschal Vigil is the point to be borne in mind for the future, as this is the apotheosis of the entire Lenten catechesis.

It remains undeniable that this Lent marks a new stage in the development of the life of the parish.

V. TODAY AND TOMORROW

Going over the course, we have sufficiently emphasized how far we have got and what remains to be done. We know all about «today.» But what of «tomorrow»? Already some of the older boys and girls, acquiring renewed vigour in the weekly meetings, endeavour to share more fully in the life of the Church and are anxious to get to grips with the problems of parish life, to go into them without hidden motives.

Their prayer is more and more an Ecclesial prayer ; they are beginning to realize their baptismal responsibilities. Will this movement grow ? In a word, will this little country parish eventually reach maturity ? It is ardently to be desired and every effort should be made to achieve it.

Doctrinal Sermons for Sundays and Feastdays According to a Liturgical Plan ~ III

Élie FOURNIER

*Former Diocesan Director of Religious Instruction*¹

GRACE AND THE SACRAMENTS

Notes for sermons.

Notes, not sermons ready for the pulpit !

Priests who are in charge of souls and assiduously cultivate both the liturgy and the Bible, will notice as they go along, not only many things I have left out but also, possible openings for development, which will inevitably require them to pass over one or other of my suggestions. The path thus opened before them will be all the better for that ; it will be their own and therefore, alive : « Better have a wrinkle or even a wart than a face as smooth and lifeless as a cake of soap. » (Sertillanges, *L'Orateur chrétien*, p. 353).

Liturgical.

By this we mean sermons that form an integral part of the liturgical celebration or else, follow closely the changing rhythm of the liturgical cycle. Vide *Lumen Vitae*, 1959, No. 1, pp. 113-126.

Each set of notes begins with, first, a quotation from the liturgy and then, *the doctrine to be brought out* from it. Both for the sake of brevity and to make the link stand out the more clearly, quotations from the Missal are often given in the Latin original.

Biblical, Pastoral.

As the liturgy constantly draws on the Bible, it is impossible to meet the requirements of the one without enlisting the help of the other. « *The*

1. This article is a continuation of those which have already appeared in the last three numbers : *Lumen Vitae*, XIV (1959), No. 1 (pp. 113-126), No. 2 (pp. 347-364), No. 3 (pp. 531-548). — Address : Boitissandeau, Ardelay-par-Montaigu (Vendée) FRANCE. — (Editor's note).

word of God is an essential element of the liturgy.» (Directoire — France, No. 1.)

Exaggeration must, of course, be avoided. As Reverend Père Becqué warns us : (*Faut-il réformer les sermons ?* p. 44) : we should not allow the pendulum, for so long weighed down on the one side, to swing now too far over to the other. From sermons devoid of biblical foundations, we must not change over to sermons that are Scripture lessons. The preacher's sense of proportion must adjust the balance : he should bear in mind that « *a quotation that is too long, or a lengthy series of quotations, will not get across to the audience.* » With this reservation, however, were we to decide of set purpose, to quote the word of God as little as possible in its « *authentic form,* » we should be abandoning both the liturgy and the « *sermon* » to adopt another form of literature — *elucubration of religious themes*. The preacher takes as his basic principle : « *the word of God is food for souls.* » (Dir. Fr. No. 1.) and, to *nourish the faith*, one drop of divine wisdom opportunely administered is more effective than a barrel of the human variety. For this reason, while keeping the capacity of his listeners well in mind, he will be glad to « let his little boat be carried along on the current of a sublime text, and if need be, sail with the stream, so long as, when it suits him, he may take to the oars and *land just at the right place.* » (Sertillanges, *ibid.*, p. 31.)

Doctrinal.

The aim is to make a landing on the shores of the Faith. « *He must hold firmly to the truths that have tradition for their warrant : ... encourage sound doctrine... so that they may be soundly established in the Faith.* » (Titus, I, 9, 13). Through the liturgy, he must bring home dogmatic and moral truths, developing each point according to its relative importance to the whole of Revelation. The greatest care will be taken to link up the subject of one Sunday sermon with that of the preceding Sunday, and to insert « *toothing stones* » as the liturgy does, ready for the following week : each Sunday's theme must also be tied up with one main theme which is never lost to sight. It is indeed a *Carthago delenda est* but with a difference : here it is a case of *building up*, Sunday after Sunday, an edifice whose « *whole fabric is bound together as it grows into a temple dedicated to the Lord.* » (Ephesians, II, 21).

The main theme.

God created man for *Life*, but death came into the world through sin. Still, the Living God persists in snatching from death man whom He created to His own likeness. When the fulness of time had come, the Son of God appeared in the flesh and brought the world an imperishable life which, in the end, will swallow up death. This « *life which is truly life* » is called *grace*, and its fountain is always flowing in the « *mysteries of* »

Godliness. » (I Timothy III, 16.) The sacraments are the acts by which Our Redeemer, unremitting in His work, leads us on to the eternal salvation which He has purchased for us through His blood.

Vide *Lumen Vitae* 1959, No. 3, pp. 531-548.

Advent-Christmas-Epiphany.

This period can be summed up in two phrases : « *Per peccatum mors* », and « *Ego veni ut vitam habeant* ». From the beginning, Life and Death were antagonistic to one another. From the beginning, too, a promise had been made (*1st Sunday in Advent*) to the whole human race (*2nd, Advent*) that Life would be victorious : a promise that begins to be realized in Mary (Immaculate Conception). Finally, the Word, in Whom is Life, was made flesh, flesh which would become the Bread of Life (Christmas). In Him we are made sons and heirs also (Octave). For all of us the first step into this Life is Faith (Epiphany).

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(This list is obviously not offered as complete. It is only intended to indicate a few works which will surely be consulted with profit.)

* * *

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

God wills us to have life. Death is an intruder.

Words of the liturgy.

Advent : a time of fresh beginnings, of renewed impetus : « *Hora est jam nos de somno surgere* » (*Epistle*). We are awaiting Someone : « *Te expectant* » (*Introit, Gradual*). We are looking forward trustfully to His coming : « *non confundentur* » (*ibid.*). We call on Him insistently : the refrains of Advent will be : « *Rorate coeli* », « *Veni* » (*Collects, Antiphons at Vespers, the « O » antiphons*).

Doctrine to be brought out.

The Church invites us to enter into a state of confident expectation, for Our Saviour is at hand to deliver us from death : « *te liberante salvari* » (*Collect*).

I. GOD WILLED THAT MAN SHOULD HAVE LIFE.

A. « *In the beginning* » : these words which form the introduction to the story of Man (Genesis I, 1) likewise introduce the story of his restoration in Christ (John I, 1).

God speaks and *Life* springs forth. Down the ages all creatures have been called into existence by God, some in one way, some in another. God rejoiced to see that his work was « good », « *And God saw that it was good* » — the refrain of the first page of the Bible. It was an organized world and living.

B. As the *crowning achievement of his work* « *God created man to his image* » (Genesis I, 27).

« To the image of God, » that is :

1) *living* : expressed by the divine breathing upon the dust of the earth (Genesis II, 7); man was so much alive that he was never to experience death : « the tree of life in the midst of paradise » (Genesis II, 9).

The tree of life will appear again in Apocalypse XXII, the closing of Revelation. Notice the many similar expressions all through Scripture referring to the Living God Who wills that man should live : *the ways of life* (Psalm XV, 10), *the fountain of life* (Ps. XXXV, 10), *the book of life* (Ps. LXVIII, 29), *the light of life* (Ps. LV, 13 and John VIII, 12), *the land of the living* (Job XXVIII, 13).

2) *endowed with intelligence, lord of creation* :

« And the Lord God, having formed out of the ground all the beasts of the earth and all the fowls of the air, brought them to Adam to see what he would call them... for whatever Adam called any living creature, the same is its name. » (Genesis II, 19).

3) *even more : admitted to intimacy with God.*

« And now they heard the voice of the Lord God, as he walked in the garden in the cool of the evening. »

Such was the blessed state called *original justice*. Justice : everything in man was perfectly straightforward, perfectly balanced, ordered and harmonious. The *soul* of man was united to the Living God (the life resulting for the soul from this union is called « *grace* ») : the *body* was perfectly submissive to the soul (disorders and sickness came only after the Fall) : *Nature* itself was entirely at man's disposal.

« *Life which is true life* » — thus Saint Paul one day described it (I Timothy VI, 19).

« *The glory of God is living man* ». St. Irenaeus.

II. THROUGH SIN, DEATH CAME INTO THE WORLD
(*Romans*, V, 12).

The enemy was on the watch : the Fallen Angel who, in turning away from God, had known death : « *a murderer from the beginning* » (*John VIII*, 44). Into the field that had been sown with life, this enemy came to sow death by drawing man into disobedience and revolt (cf. *Matthew XIII*, 38).

A. *We have all been familiar with the story from childhood. It is absolutely essential to avoid giving the same importance to what is merely descriptive detail as to the underlying doctrines of revealed truths...*

« Thou mayest eat thy full of all the trees in the garden except the tree which brings knowledge of good and evil : if ever thou eatest of this, thy doom is death. » (*Genesis II*, 16, 17.)

In biblical language, « *to have knowledge* » means « *to experience*. » To know good and evil is the same as knowing *everything*, allowing oneself every experience... God required that man should use his liberty within the limits He had set. Man claims unlimited scope ; he wants *moral autonomy* which frees him from any higher rule. He therefore disobeyed a definite command from God — a command described for us in the imaginative style of the Bible and which the Church has not seen fit to define with any further and unnecessary precision.

B. *Thus man cut himself off from the Living God.* Holy Writ tells us that « the way of the tree of life » was closed (*Genesis III*, 24). In this separation from God lies *death*. The image of God was destroyed ; the order and harmony established by the Creator were disturbed in every part of our nature : the *soul* broke its bonds of submission and friendship with God, while the *body*, in its turn, withdrew from the irradiation of the soul. Invaded by concupiscence (*Genesis III*, 11), it was subject, henceforth, to pain and sickness — preludes to death (*III*, 18), until it went its normal way in death itself. Even exterior *Nature* became hostile (*Genesis III*, 17 — cf. *Romans VIII*, 22). This, then, is the *Fall*.

The invasion of sin and death : that is what the first pages of the Bible, in their very special literary form, set out to tell us ; the invasion that was the work of him who, « *a murderer from the beginning*, » (*John VIII*, 44), is deservedly called the « lord of death » (*Hebrews II*, 14).

Conclusion.

We have been given a Saviour Who has acquired for us salvation and Life : and yet, this salvation and Life remain for each of us, the reward of personal striving. The Church is now warning us that it is time for a fresh impetus, time to begin building anew the edifice of our salvation : « *propior est nostra salus quam cum credimus* » (Epistle). This we must do by studying our Faith afresh as it is presented to us in the liturgical cycle. The mystery of Christ, Our Saviour into which we are led by Faith, is the mystery of « restoration » (*Postcommunion*) accomplished once and for all, yet ever in progress throughout human history. It is the restoration of what has been the divine plan from the beginning. *Let us lift up our heads for deliverance is at hand* (Gospel). With each liturgical year, we must advance a stage further and draw nearer the goal where, once God's plan has been restored in its entirety, « that which is mortal will be *swallowed up in Life* » (II Corinthians V, 4).

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Universal death. The promise of universal salvation.

The words of the Liturgy.

It is a question of joy : « *gloriam vocis suae in laetitia* » (*Introit*), « *laetatus sum* » (*Collect*), « *plebs tua laetabitur* » (*Offertory*).

It is a question of life : « *vivificabis nos* » (*Offertory*), which bursts forth even in bodies struggling with disease (*Gospel*). These blessings constitute the basic elements of salvation to be offered to all Nations : « *Dominus veniet ad salvandas Gentes* » (*Introit*), « *laetamini Gentes...* etc. » (*Epistle*, 2nd part).

Doctrine to be brought out.

« The Mass is penetrated through and through with the missionary

spirit » (*Feder Missal*). *Salvation is to be universal* since the Fall was universal.

I. SIN AND DEATH

HAVE SPREAD THEIR RAVAGES OVER ALL HUMANKIND.

A. The event in which we are required to believe. — The first chapters of *Genesis* are the story of the conquest of the human race by death. *Sin* spreads and overflows : « all flesh had corrupted its ways » (*Genesis* 6, 12) ; *death* follows in its wake : « all things that are in the earth shall be consumed » (*Genesis* 6, 17). At Babel, a new phase, on a collective basis, of the original revolt. The result : an utterly dislocated humanity plunging deeper into death...

St. Paul will tell us that « *scripture represents us as all under the bondage of sin* » (*Galatians* III, 22). For him, sin is the evil power that separates man from God, deprives him of salvation, plunges him into death ; the death of the body is both the result and the sign of this. In the Epistle to the *Romans* (I-III), he sketches for us a lamentable moral situation.

« For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice... They became vain in their thoughts. And their foolish heart was darkened... Wherefore, God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness : to dishonour their own bodies among themselves... For this cause, God delivered them up to shameful affections... » (*Romans* I, 18-26).

Truly may one speak of « *disintegration*, » and the liturgy employs the word on the feast of *Christ-King* : « *Familiae Gentium disgregatae* » (*Collect*).

B. The « why and wherefore ». — We are not forbidden to reflect upon and try to discover, in the light of the very words of God, the reasons for the universality of sin.

Saint Thomas, shortly before his death, affirmed in all serenity : « *This question is easily solved if you make a distinction between person and nature.* » — « *Person* » : we do not share in the personal sin of Adam. The sin which is in everyone from his first moment is obviously not a sin which he has personally committed. — « *Nature* » : however, this sin is contracted personally because the nature which comes to each in birth was, originally, graced with divine life and other supernatural gifts. It was to have been transmitted with these gifts but, through the sin of the Head of our race our nature has been passed on to us deprived of these gifts. In Adam, the *person* has infected the nature. In each of his descendants, the *nature* received in birth infects the person who is henceforth at grips with sin and death...

II. LIFE, HOWEVER, CONQUERS DEATH
AND THIS BLESSING IS GIVEN TO ALL.

That is the reason why we are invited to *be joyful*.

A. What Saint Paul tells us. Having painted a gloomy picture of humanity wandering away from the road of salvation and made it clear that death has been inherited by mankind, St. Paul goes on :

« Only, the grace which came to us was out of all proportion to the fault. If this one man's fault brought death on a whole multitude, *all the more lavish* was God's grace, shewn to a whole multitude, that free gift he made us in the grace brought by one man, Jesus Christ... And if death began its reign through one man, owing to one man's fault, *more fruitful still* is the grace, the gift of justification, which bids men enjoy a reign of life through one man, Jesus Christ. Well then, one man commits a fault, and it brings condemnation upon all ; one man makes amends, and it brings to all justification, that is life... » (Romans V, 15-18).

Saint Paul takes pleasure in stressing contrasts : death and life, fault and gift, multitude and oneness. He wants to bring this out by opposing :

The serious *fall* : the *raising up* which is all the more striking.

A very painful *captivity* : *liberation* which is therefore all the more joyful.

Universal *death* : *Life* is ours in superabundant profusion. (cf. Romans XI, 32).

B. The fulfilment in History of God's plan to give Life. — The story of the invasion of sin and death is told in the Bible only to bring to the forefront the unfolding of the wonders wrought by God as, persisting in bringing man back to *Life*, He carried out His plan stage by stage, « through the length and breadth of history. » The progressive realization of God's gift culminating in Jesus Christ...

The choice of *Abraham* is made with the whole world in mind :

The *Prophets* proclaim unceasingly that other nations will be admitted to a share in the joy of the Chosen People : « *Ex Sion Deus manifeste veniet* » (*Gradual*), and that the Gentiles will put their hope in « the root that shall spring from Jesse » (*Epistle*).

C. The diffusion of Life continues through the Missionary Church. — It is the Church that everywhere « musters in His presence His faithful servants » (*Gradual*), imparting the blessings of

the Cross to all (cf. John XI, 52). « *She takes her stand on the heights* » (*Communion*) to be seen by all souls of good will and ever renews her invitation to all to « *enter into the House of the Lord* » (*Alleluia*). Thus she carries to all nations the salvation obtained through Jesus Christ. Whoever has faith in Him becomes one with her by Baptism and the sacraments, and, by that very fact, places himself under the influence of the Saviour and steps into the stream of Life...

Conclusion.

Let the people of God rejoice (*Offertory*), for « *the Lord is coming to save the nations* » (*Introit*) in the gentle mystery of Christmas. We have not to wait for any other to save us (cf. *Gospel*). At His word, disease, the painful subjection of humanity to the forces of death, loses its hold ; each of His miracles (*Gospel*) is an advance signal of the Life which will be unfurled at the Resurrection, when « *He will make death disappear forever* » according to the prediction of the prophet *Isaias* (XXV, 8). This is the great cry of Advent. The Church keeps urging us to throw ourselves into this work, (« *propior est nostra salus* »), and to strive to bring all men, our brethren, to share in it...

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THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The dawn of salvation and life.

The Words of the Liturgy.

A fresh invitation to rejoice : « *Gaudens gaudebo... exultabit anima mea* » (*Introit*). The call to salvation and life resounds throughout this Mass : « *induit me vestimentis salutis* » (*Introit*), « *inveniet vitam, hauriet salutem* » (*Epistle*). The superabundance of the gift of God shines forth in Mary : « *Benedicta in mulieribus* » (*Gospel, Offertory, Gradual*), « *Tota pulchra* » (*Alleluia verse*) « *fecit tibi magna* » (*Communion*).

Doctrine to be brought out.

It was God's will that this *Life* Which was to fill the whole world, should come into the world through Mary. In her, *Life had already conquered death* ; she already enjoyed the effects of salvation.

I. GOD HAS WILLED THAT LIFE SHOULD COME INTO THE WORLD
THROUGH MARY.

A. Liturgical implications of the Epistle : « The Lord made me his when first he went about his work, at the birth of time... » Before the creation began (cf. 1st, Advent) it was God's plan to save the world. At the heart of this plan was Mary, she who was to make the Incarnation possible. The mysterious origin of the Virgin was foreseen and decided by the very same decree as the Incarnation of Divine Wisdom » (Bull *Ineffabilis*).

B. We must see how this is connected *with the story of the beginning of things*. When the enemy brought sin and death into the world (cf. the preceding Sunday), God put a curse upon him and declared : « *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel* » (Genesis III, 15). This is a solemn declaration of war by God Himself : « *I* »... The enemies are face to face : the demon and his « seed » (cf. « sons of the devil » John VIII, 44) on one side, the woman and her « seed » on the other. One of the combattants will have his head crushed : the one who brought sin and death into the world. The other, the seed of the woman, will carry off the victory, but not without suffering the extremity of suffering. The later developments in the divine plan enlighten us as to the meaning of the prophecy. The Conqueror is Jesus (cf. I John III, 8 ; John XII, 31 ; Hebrews II, 14). From the beginning God clearly and openly pointed out to us in advance the merciful redeemer of the human race » (Bull *Ineffabilis*). But « *who is this woman ?* »

II. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY
BEGINS TO CARRY THE PLAN OF LIFE INTO EFFECT.

A. It is through *Mary* that the Conqueror, Jesus, is brought into the world :

« But when the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son made of a woman, made under the law that He might redeem them that were under

the law that we might receive the adoption of sons.» (Galatians IV, 4.)
«... sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh» (Romans VIII, 3).

« At the same time He expressed in a striking (*insigniter*) way the common enmity of both the one and the other for the devil » (Bull *Ineffabilis*).

B. This woman, associated with the Conqueror in such a remarkable way, could she for a single moment have been the prey of sin and death, that is of defeat?

1) Before the voice of the Church finally closed the question, there were *great doctors* who feared that the universal character of the Redeptor might be compromised by what they deemed an exception to the sacrifice of the Cross which had not yet been offered...

2) *The Holy Spirit Who leads His Church* in the light of the whole truth (John XVI, 13) allowed this very objection to be of use in developing the exact idea of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of Jesus. Already the *Council of Trent*, proclaiming the universality of original sin, declared that this was not intended to include Mary (D. 792). It was *Pius IX* who formulated finally and *definitively* the belief of the people of God : « The Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception was by an entirely special grace and *privilege* of God Almighty, preserved from all stain of Original Sin, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus, Saviour of the human race » (Bull *Ineffabilis*, D. 1641). She too is redeemed, but « *in a more wonderful manner* ». Collect of the feast : « *ex morte Filii tui praevisa.* »

(This is ratified from Heaven : Lourdes 1858...)

C. In Mary Immaculate, the victory was announced : « nec delectasti inimicos meos super me » (Introit). No taint of evil (Alleluia verse). No death : all in her rings of salvation and Life (Introit, Epistle, Gospel, etc.)

In the past, preachers have liked to juxtapose EVA-AVE. A reversal of names, an opposition in deeds, works. It exactly expresses the antithesis of Death and Life : « Per feminam mors, per feminam vita. » (St. Augustine-Breviary : *De Beata in Sabbato*).

In Mary we see the first realization of the plan of Life which was to be consummated on Calvary and at Eastertide. Through her too, it will be made ever more widely effective for « *she delights to be with the children of men* » (*Epistle*). From generation to generation, men will proclaim her as Blessed ; she will help them

to escape death (Ave Maria) and attain to *Life* « *Qui me invenerit inveniet vitam* » (*Epistle*).

Conclusion.

In Mary Immaculate we see the beginning of the victory of Life over death and the Dawn of Salvation ; in her, the first beneficiary of the gift of God ; it is in her that the Saviour inaugurates His work.

She who helped to frame this very gift opens the way for the Saviour who is to come. The gift of God is still with us, always at our disposal in the *Sacraments* which are for us the relay points on the journey of salvation, whose stages were covered in one bound by Mary. In us the gift of God is « *restoration* » ; in Mary it was « *preservation* ». In the Postcommunion we ask that this restoration should be more and more fully accomplished, each time we receive the Sacraments : « *illius in nobis culpae vulnera reparent ; a qua immaculatam Beatissimam Mariam conceptionem singulariter prae-servasti.* »

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Salvation is deliverance and enlightenment.

The Words of the Liturgy.

Joy which was already blossoming on the preceding Sundays, reaches its fulness today. « *Gaudete in Dominum semper, iterum dico gaudete* » (*Introit, Epistle*), « *confortamini* » (*Communion*). The joy of captives awaiting their liberator : « *avertisti captivitatem* » (*Introit, Offertory*). The Liberator who brings light : « *mentes nostrae tenebras illustra* » (*Collect*). The Liberator who is here present and very close to us « *prope est* » (*Introit, Epistle* — cf. the Great 'O' Antiphons).

Doctrine to be brought out.

How can we but rejoice? Our Saviour restores *Life* to us by *delivering us from our captivity* and *shedding his light in the darkness of our souls*.

I. THE SAVIOUR DELIVERS US FROM OUR CAPTIVITY.

How utterly tedious captivity is! Yet that is the characteristic of our state as children of Adam. The *Gospel* tells us that the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost, and to give his life for its redemption. *Saint Paul* frequently uses the terms *purchase* and *redemption* which is the exact equivalent of «*liberation*.» The *liturgy* expresses this same idea throughout the year: Advent, Passiontide («*per proprium sanguinem aeterna redemptione inventa*») Ascensiontide («*captivam duxit captivitatem*»), Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost...

A. Who are our captors? — 1. *sin*; 2. *death* which has dominion over all (cf. *preceding Sundays*); 3. the *Devil* who is called by Our Lord «the prince of this world» (John XII, 31) and who looks on himself as such: «To thee will I give all this power... For to me they are delivered: and to whom I will, I give them» (Luke IV, 6). Repulsed by Our Lord «the devil left him in peace until the time should come» (Luke IV, 13). We see him coming back into the picture at the Passion (Luke XXII, 53) and for his final crushing.

From all three *Jesus delivers us*:

«By his death he would depose the prince of death, that is, the devil; he would deliver those multitudes who lived all the while as slaves, made over to the fear of death.» (Hebrews II, 14 — cf. I John III, 8).

«This so-called «strong man» is taken in his own chains, all the schemes of the evil one rebound on his own head. The prince of this world is bound, those he held in bondage are freed from his grasp. Death is destroyed by another death, birth is renewed by another birth.» (St. Leo, *op. cit.*, p. 83).

B. In what does this state of captivity consist? — Our nature, which was made for God, cannot attain to Him by its own strength. *It cannot free itself* alone from the state of sin and death into which it was plunged by original sin; it is incapable of changing its condition by any means of its own, and therefore it calls for help:

«Unhappy man that I am! *Who shall deliver me* from the body of this

death ? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ, Our Lord... » « For the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and death. » (Romans VII, 24 ; VIII, 2).

Two currents of opinion have found their way into the interpretation of texts of Scripture relating to this captivity.

The one is more pessimistic, and concentrates attention on *human nature ravaged by sin* (« totius generis humani massa damnata » is *Luther's* very exaggerated expression): the other, striving to discover *how much remains sound* in the « likeness of God, » tends rather to admire the slow ascent to Christ.

The Holy Spirit working in the Church, merges these two currents together in her, balances their strength and stems their course into *Tradition* which has been expressed in several Councils, especially the *Council of Trent*...

It was to *free* us from such a captivity that the « Almighty Son of God, He Who fills all, equal in all things to His Father, united to Himself a human nature ... He ennobles our nature in uniting Himself to it, without diminishing His nature by communicating it to us. » In this way, He has procured for us the means of attaining to God ; He « gives us all confidence, bids us come forward, emboldened by our faith in Him. » (Ephesians III, 12).

II. OUR SAVIOUR BRINGS HIS LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS OF OUR SOULS.

How distasteful darkness is ! Moreover, it is the characteristic of our state as sons of Adam. *Saint John* : the struggle between light and darkness (cf. the whole of the Gospel). *Saint Paul* : Romans I, 18 ; II, 19 ; Ephesians IV, 18 ; V, 8 sq. ; Colossians I, 13... *The Liturgy* : Candlemas, Paschal Vigil, soon the Mass of Dawn...

A. Whence comes this darkness ? — From the same trio : 1. *sin*, the work of darkness (cf. John III, 19 sq.) ; 2. *death* (cf. the Great « O » Antiphons, 20th and 21st December) ; 3. the *devil* : « This is your hour and the power of darkness » (Luke XXII, 53 ; cf. John XIII, 30, etc.).

B. What constitutes this state of darkness ?

1. The fundamental powerlessness of our minds to grasp the things of God « Who inhabiteth light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen nor can see » (I Timothy VI, 16) (Truths of the supernatural order).

2. Our powerlessness, likewise — to some extent — to grasp truths which, nevertheless, are not in themselves beyond the scope of human reason. « Men *grope their way* » (Acts XII, 27). The Vatican Council

proclaimed that Revelation was necessary in order that, « in the present state of the human race, these truths might be known by all surely and certainly without any admixture of error. » (D. 1786) (Examples, *ad. lib.*).

Christ has rescued us from the powers of darkness (Col. I, 13). Our Saviour « *has shed abroad the rays of life and immortality* » (II Timothy I, 10). That is why *Baptism* and *conversion* (cf. Heb. VI, 4 ; X, 32) were called « *enlightenment* »... « *He brings light into the darkness of our souls* » (Collect). Let us prepare to acclaim at *Christmas*, this light that shines in the darkness (John I, 5 ; Gospel of the day) : « *Grant... that we who are bathed in the new light of thy Incarnate Word, may show forth in our deeds the light that by faith shines in our hearts* » (Mass of Dawn : Collect).

Conclusion.

Captivity and darkness : the devil's spiteful retaliation.

Light and freedom : *the crushing of Satan's head*, in these lies the victory that we owe to the seed of the woman. « *It is high time for us to awake out of our sleep* » as the Church warns us on the first Sunday of Advent. « *Surge qui dormis, et illuminabit te Christus* » (Ephesians V, 14). Today, it is to the Saviour that insistently, she cries, « *Come, stretch out Thy arm to save us* » (Great « O » antiphon, 18th), « *Release the prisoner from the darkness of his dungeon and from the night of his death* » (Great « O » antiphons, 20th and 21st).

Let us rejoice for the Lord is nigh.

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Our Saviour still comes to us in the Christmas mystery.

Words of the Liturgy.

The desire of Holy Church is about to be granted ; her prayers become more insistent. The refrains of Advent come all together in this Mass and reach their culminating point : « *Rorate* », « *Veni* », « *prope est* ». Today the special emphasis lies on our being invited

to « *prepare the way of the Lord* and straighten out his paths » (*Gospel*). Our attention is drawn to the fact that the awaited day looks forward to another : « *quoadusque veniet Dominus : qui et illuminabit abscondita tenebrarum* » (*Epistle*. Cf. preceding Sunday). The Collect of Christmas Eve will remind us of this : « *venientem quoque judicem...* » In the interval between these two « days, » the « *mysteries of God* » (*Epistle*) are there for our benefit.

Doctrine to be brought out.

Our Saviour is still continuing His work of deliverance and enlightenment. His Church is the « *steward of His mysteries* » and having prepared our souls, helps us to attain these mysteries *in her feast days and sacraments*.

I. IN HIS MYSTERIES, THE SAVIOUR STILL « COMES ».

A. *He came*. His coming in the flesh is an historical fact that took place at a definite date ; so well known that the eras have been divided by it, the dates of all other historical events are fixed in relation to it. *The « Tear I »*... But it would be a mistake indeed, to identify His coming with that simple fact : for He has « *set up His tabernacle* among us, and has come to stay.

B. The Saviour *comes* in each of His feasts. « *Veni* », is what we have been saying to Him since the beginning of Advent, and today we repeat it more ardently still : the *Great 'O's*, all the *antiphons* of Vespers. The Church's festivities are not celebrated to commemorate a past that has gone : the exact date of Easter alone has remained a matter of interest ; the other feasts are, as it were, the annual unfolding of the Mystery of Redemption centred round Easter. They are not a new coming of the Saviour in addition to His historical advent ; they are *one and the same coming* but spread abroad and communicated in « *the mysteries of God* » (*Epistle*) all gathered round Easter and the Eucharist. A true coming but mysterious and sacramental...

C. One day, at the consummation of His work, the Saviour *will come* as judge (cf. *Epistle* also *Collect* of Christmas Eve). In to-day's *Epistle* where this final coming is foretold, it is at the same time pointed out to us (and this is significant), that the work of salvation and of *Life* knows no interruption : the Apostles and their successors are « *the stewards of the mysteries of God.* » These mysteries are summed up in the Advent refrain : « *Rorate coeli desuper,*

et nubes... » Salvation comes from *on High*, from the Heavens, the clouds... and nevertheless, is *ripened on our earth* : « *aperietur terra et germinet Salvatorem.* » That is the secret of the liturgical and sacramental mystery : The Saviour living with the Father acts *on earth*, works for « *our salvation*, » by means of the mysteries He has instituted... through these, just as formerly on His way through Galilee, power comes forth from Him. (Cf. Luke VIII, 46, etc.)

II. THE WAY MUST BE PREPARED FOR HIS COMING.

A. In to-day's *Gospel* we have the cry of John the Baptist echoing that of Isaias. It is an allusion to the ancient custom in the East of preparing the roads for the journeys of the great...

B. It is a question of the *way to our souls*... So that Our Saviour may, in each of His mysteries, penetrate more deeply into our souls we must make this preparation before each feast day by a deepening of our faith.

« In the common joy, the more deeply all have grasped the meaning of the feast, the more deeply will our devotion be impregnated with religion. » (St. Leo, *op. cit.*, p. 203).

« Every good Christian should, with the help of sermons or of some appropriate book, try to understand and enter into the spirit of each feast, and consider what is its object and its special end, etc... » (St. Pius X, cf. Dom Marmion, *op. cit.*, p. 33).

The result of this will be that the feast « will fill the mind more fully with the mysteries, truths or deeds that we are celebrating and lead us on to corresponding feelings and acts. » Then the feast will be for the Christian « one of God's days, a real festivity which will give joy to the soul, restore it, satiate it, fill it with renewed vigour to bear the daily sufferings and struggles. » (St. Pius X, *ibid.*).

Thus, by a renewal of faith, we open up the soul more widely to welcome Our Lord and its paths are less rough for Him to pass along. (Cf. Cycle III : *Moral Theology* : souls of « *good will* »)... Otherwise, routine sets in and in spite of the frequentation of the « *mysteries of God* » (*Epistle*) our salvation does not go forward. *We must prepare the way* for Our Lord by faith which grows deeper with the help of the Missal. Just at the close of to-day's holy mysteries for which we have gathered together, the Church makes us ask « *ut cum frequentatione mysterii, crescat nostrae salutis effectus* » (*Postcommunion*).

Conclusion.

« *O that thou wouldst rend the Heavens and come down,* » cried

the prophet *Isaias*. This prayer has been answered : the Saviour has come, the clouds have rained Him forth (cf. Luke I, 35 : « the power of the Most High will overshadow thee... ») And yet He ever *continues to come* to us. His feasts which are « *the sacrament of our salvation* » (St. Leo the Great, *op. cit.*, p. 74 etc.) In the sweet mystery of Christmas « He will not delay. » Let us make our own the cry of *Isaias* and translate it thus : « *Oh ! if thou wouldst but break down the hard door of our hearts and come in at thy good pleasure... !* » Let us then prepare His way, straighten out His path... » in these last days so that Christmas may « *lead us nearer to salvation* » (*Postcommunion*). We must go forward with immense confidence, for « *the Lord draws near to everyone that calls upon Him with a true heart* » (*Gradual*).

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* * *

CHRISTMAS

*The Word was made flesh.
The flesh will become Our Bread of life.*

Words of the Liturgy.

Here we find once more all the themes of Advent in vigorous concentration. Sin has been destroyed : « *salvum faciet populum a peccatis eorum* », « *delebitur iniquitas terrae* » (The Eve : (*Gospel*), *Alleluia*). Deliverance : *nativitas liberet* (Third Mass : Collect). Joy so great that at last we breathe a new life : « *recensita natiuitate respirare* » (Eve : *Postcom.*) Complete renewal : « *novitas natalis instauret... humanam repulit vetustatem* » (Dawn : *Postcom.*). Light : « *hanc sacratissimam noctem veri luminis, etc...* » (Midnight : Collect), *hodie descendit lux magna* (Third Mass : *Alleluia*), « *erat lux vera* » (*Gospel*) (Cf. also : Vigil : *Introit* ; Dawn : *Introit* and Collect).

Doctrine to be brought out.

Christmas : the feast of *Life* brought into this world. Two expressions of Saint John gather together, as it were, in one beam of

light all the lessons of Advent, and brilliantly illuminate the question of the *sacraments* as acts of Christ and fountains of *Life*.

I. « THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH. » Life, intended for us by God from the beginning (*1st Sunday of Advent*), has been brought from on High by the Word of God.

« Our Saviour, beloved sons, is born today. Let us rejoice thereat ! There is no place for sadness where life is born ; that life which destroys the fear of death and bestows on us the joy of the eternal promises. » (St. Leo, *op. cit.*, page 69).

A. *The starting point* : the Word ! In order to produce the spark of faith, we must bring together a few texts from the missal : « *In principio* » : Gospel of the day, read again at each Mass, at the moment when we are setting off again to go about our daily duties (cf. *Immaculate Conception* : the divine decree « *antequam terra fieret* ») — « *In splendoribus sanctorum* » : Midnight : *Gradual* and *Communion*, text sung each Sunday at Vespers (cf. *Colossians* I, 15-17) — « *Novissime diebus istis (Deus) locutus est nobis in Filio... per quem fecit et saecula, qui cum sit splendor gloriae...* » (Third Mass : *Epistle*) : the light of God, inaccessible in itself, comes and shines in our darkness, adapting itself to our eyes in the flesh of the Son of God ; « on account of our weakness, He lowered Himself to those who could not raise themselves to Him, and covered with a veil of flesh the splendour of His Majesty which our human eyes could not have borne to look upon » (St. Leo. p. 115 — cf. *Prefaces* of Christmas and Epiphany). « The fulness of Him Who fills all : of His fulness we have all received » (*Ephesians* I, 23 ; *John* I, 16).

B. *The point of arrival* : the flesh ! A word which shocks in itself and even more by the contrast...

« There was something the Law could not do, because flesh and blood could not lend it the power : and this God has done, by sending us His own Son, in the fashion of our guilty nature, to make amends for our guilt. He has signed the death-warrant of sin in our nature. » (*Romans*, VIII, 3).

The Word has nothing to do with sin which He has come to destroy, but truly has He the flesh through which He will destroy sin which has taken up its abode in it. So truly has He this flesh, that it will be torn on the Cross and, from His wounds, and especially from the opening in His Heart (cf. feast of the *Sacred*

Heart) will spring forth fountains of Life. On this day we celebrate His infant body, of truly human, though virginal, origin :

« Our Lord Jesus Christ has indeed come to do away with our diseases, not to contract them ; to apply a remedy to our vices, not to be afflicted with them ... That is why He had to be born in a new way... » (St. Leo, p. 79).

On our way we must thank Her who agreed to procure this blessing for the world, preparing the crushing defeat of the enemy.

C. And this continues ! Because He has in truth « *come to dwell* » (*Gospel*) right in the midst of the human caravan, He has come to dwell in the flesh, in our flesh (cf. « *our salvation* », *1st Advent* ; « *mortem nostram destruxit* » (*Preface Easter*, etc.). He dwells in the sacramental mystery, wrapped, as it were, in swaddling clothes as in the manger, at the disposition of *all* (cf. *2nd Advent*) « unto the very ends of the earth, » « until the consummation of the world, » « until He returns » (cf. *4th, Advent ; Ascension*). In order to procure *Life* for us,

« in order to recall us from our original captivity and from the errors of the world to eternal happiness, He came down to us since we could not raise ourselves to Him. » (St. Leo, p. 93).

II. « MY FLESH FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD » (John VI, 51). The life which had been brought to us from on High leads us back to immortality.

A. The point of departure for the journey to Heaven : It is the flesh of the Son of God in us :

« I am the bread of life... the bread which comes down from heaven is such that he who eats of it never dies. I myself am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live for ever. And now, what is this bread which I am to give ? It is my flesh given for the life of the world... For my flesh is real food... » (John, VI, 48, 59).

For His flesh enters into ours and He changes us in Himself by « incorporating » us, and it is by *His* own life that *we* live : « He who eats my flesh... lives continually in *me* (VI, 57). « *Christ Jesus became our flesh by His birth ; thus we became His body by our re-birth* » (St. Leo, p. 97).

B. The point of arrival : Eternal Life ! « He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, enjoys eternal life » (VI, 54).

Cf. John IV, 14: fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam.

Col. I, 27: Christus in vobis spes gloriae (cf. III, 3-4).

Eph. II, 6: consedere fecit in coelestibus.

« He sows in our bosoms the seed of immortality. » (Leo XIII, Enc. *Mirae caritatis*).

C. And that continues, through the *sacraments* which are at once the self-abasement of the Word among us, proportioned to our weakness, and our grafting onto Him :

« By adopting our nature, He became the ladder by which we can, thanks to Him raise ourselves up to Him ... Our Catholic faith must therefore recognize its titles to nobility in the humility of the Lord; and the Church must rejoice at the sacraments of her salvation, she who is the body of Christ ... He has become one of our race so that we might be participants of His divine nature. That principle of fecundity which He found in the bosom of the Blessed Virgin He has communicated to the Baptismal fonts; He has given to the water what He had given to His Mother... » (St. Leo, p. 120).

The *sacraments*, above all, the Holy Eucharist, are therefore the *prolongation of Christmas*. Through them we may enter into the stream of Life of which Christmas has opened the spring.

Conclusion.

The work of death accomplished by our First Parents has, therefore, been truly *repaired* : « The Son of God took our cause in hand in order to *repair* our nature which He had created, and to destroy death which He had not made » (St. Leo, p. 115). That sin was destroyed we had already been told in the Mass of Christmas Eve. Through the flesh born of Mary and become the Bread of Life, we have been taken up into God : « *His miraculous birth has dispelled the ancient curse of mankind* » (Dawn : *Postcommunion*). Thus, on the day of joy, the human race gets its breath back, it « *breathes* » once more (Eve : *Postcommunion* — cf. captivity, darkness, 3rd Advent), for it has received *the gift of immortality* (Third Mass : *Postcommunion*).

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SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

Life which makes us adopted sons and heirs.

Words of the Liturgy.

The Word of God which had drawn beings out of the *primaeval* chaos, has once more pierced the night : « *Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia et nox in suo cursu*, etc. » (*Introit*, 3rd, *Advent* ; *Christmas*). He will find His way even through the night of hearts : « *ut revelentur ex multis cordibus cogitationes* » (*Gospel*). The Word will be an issue on which the human race will be divided ; to those who receive Him, He will bring the « *resurrection* » (*Gospel*). « *The fulness of time* » has come (*Epistle*).

Doctrine to be brought out.

The Son of God makes us *sons by adoption* and *heirs* (*Epistle*).

I. THE SON MAKES SONS OF US.

This truth is of such importance that the Church reminds us of it at the end of every Mass (John I, 12').

The *Epistle* goes into details. Humanity is compared by St. Paul to someone growing up.

A. The race was for a long time *in dependence on the elements of this world*. The world was, as it were, a power holding men in tutelage ; the « prince of this world » was the devil leading men to death (cf. *1st* and *3rd Advent*). Men obeyed the wisdom of this world, adhered to natural principals of conduct which were very inferior to life in Christ : but they were looking forward to something better (cf. *Hebrews XI*)...

B. Then came « *the fulness of time* » bringing the « *Saviour of the world* » (John IV, 42 ; I John IV, 14). Note the importance of the expression « *made of a woman* » : truly He took something of ours so that He might give us something of His : « *admirabile commercium* » (*Antiphon* — *Circumcision*). Mary's virginity is discretely emphasized : she is « more a mother than any other mother. » The truth that God really took flesh is fundamental in Christian dogma ; for it is by union with the glorified body of the Saviour that we are made divine. We become sons through the Son.

Without doubt the state of infancy which the Son of God did not consider unworthy of His majesty, developed with growth and age into maturity. There is no doubt but that He fully consummated the triumph of His Passion and Resurrection and that all the actions that He accomplished for our sakes in His state of abasement belong to the past. Nevertheless, to-day's feast renews for us the sacred advent of Jesus born of the Virgin Mary, and we find that *while we are adoring the nativity of our Saviour we are also celebrating our own origins*, the birth of Christ, indeed, is the beginning of the Christian people ... Every believer, to no matter what part of the world he belongs, if he is regenerated in Christ ... belongs to the race of the Saviour Who *became the Son of Man* that we might become « *Sons of God.* » (Saint Leo, p. 127).

II. SONS BY ADOPTION.

A. The Israelites were already *adopted* (Romans IX, 4). God calls them His children (Deut. XIV, 1 ; Exodus IV, 22). And yet there was no true adoption until after the coming of the Son « *in spiritum vivificantem* » (I Corinthians XV, 45).

B. Adoption as practised *by men* cannot give life. In human adoption a person already living, has rights bestowed on him *as if* he were the true son of his adopted parent... *Divine* adoption rests on no such supposition. It makes us « *partakers of the divine nature* » (II Peter I, 4) ; we are not only called sons of God but we are sons in all truth because we have been « *born again* » (John III, 3 ; I Peter I, 23), « *regenerated* » (I Peter I, 3).

How can this be done ? This was *Abraham's* question and was to be asked again by *Nicodemus* (John III, 4), and even by *Mary* (Luke I, 34). The answer is ever the same all through the history of salvation : « *Nothing is impossible with God* » (Genesis XVIII, 14 ; Luke I, 37). « *The Word was made flesh. To those who have received him he has given the power to become the children of God* »...

C. And « *to prove that you are sons*, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying *Abba ! Father !* » (*Epistle*). « *Abba* », the word employed by Our Lord in the human tongue that He spoke (Mark XIV, 36) ; the word that became sacred among the first Christians who added the word « *Pater* » in their own language. The faithful of all times have used the same expression as Our Lord : « *Our Father,* » because they are sons by Him and in Him. « *The fulness of time,* » for new relations have been established between God and men who have become His sons : « *For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in*

fear : but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry : Abba ! Father ! » (Romans VIII, 15).

III. HEIRS :

No longer, then, art thou a slave, thou art a son ; and because thou art a son, thou hast, through God, the son's right of inheritance (*Epistle*).

A. Under the *Old Covenant* there was already talk of inheritance. At first, it referred to a country, « thy land which thou hast given to thy people in possession » (III Kings VIII, 36) after having promised it to the Patriarchs (cf. Genesis XII, 1 ; XIII, 14, etc.). From the time of the *Prophets* onwards, God Himself is the portion of His people (Jeremias X, 16).

B. Under the *New Covenant* sealed in the blood of Jesus (for which reason it is referred to as a « testament »), the inheritance came into effect for the way to God had been opened (cf. Ephesians, Hebrews). We are « children, therefore heirs ; heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ » (Romans VIII, 17).

The inheritance comprises all the possessions that Jesus has acquired for us : — the *Kingdom* of the first three Gospels, the *New City* of the Apocalypse, the *Glory* and *Incorruptibility* of the Epistles of Saint Paul and Saint Peter (I Corinthians XV ; I Peter I, 4), the « gift of immortality » (*Christmas*), the « land of the Living » (Office of the Dead). How beautifully this is expressed in to-day's liturgy : « effectum beatae perennitatis » (*Secret*).

Conclusion.

Jesus, then, gives to those who receive Him « the power to become the children of God, » for He is Himself « true God and life eternal » (I John V, 20). Through the *sacraments* that He has left us, we are « born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible » (I Peter I, 23). At Christmas we are insistently reminded of this ; « lavacrum regenerationis », « novitas natalis » (Dawn : *Epistle* and *Postcommunion*), « divinae generationis » (Third Mass : *Postcommunion*). In this Sunday's Mass the idea of « growth » is emphasized (*Epistle*). Each of us is subject to it, each of us obliged to aim at it : Our Saviour Himself conformed to its law (*Gospel*) ; « crescamus in illo per omnia... » The degree of our sonship will determine on the day of judgement (Christmas Eve : *Collect*), the degree in which we shall be heirs.

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* * *

THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

The spiritual dwelling founded on the corner-stone.

Words of the Liturgy.

The name of Jesus is eternal : « *a saeculo nomen tuum* » (*Gradual*) for this name indicates His work of salvation, decided in the eternal decrees (cf. *1st Advent : Immaculate Conception*). « He is the Saviour of the human race » (*Collect*). He alone could carry through this work of salvation to a successful end : « *Lapis in caput anguli... nec est aliud nomen... etc.* » He is the Master in this work of salvation : He is it Who leads us to our inheritance (cf. *preceding Sunday*) of « *eternal predestination* » (*Postcommunion*).

Doctrine to be brought out.

The *Life* brought by Jesus into the world (our life which is salvation, deliverance, enlightenment, — cf. *3rd Advent*) is something which develops, is built up « *in time* » (Cf. « *Plenitudo temporis* » time which must be turned to good account : January 1st is here).

I. JESUS, THE CORNER-STONE ON WHICH THE SALVATION
OF THE WORLD IS BUILT.

A. The Epistle of this day : « He is that stone, rejected by you, the builders, that has become the chief stone at the corner. Salvation is not to be found elsewhere ; this alone of all the names under heaven has been appointed to man as the one by which we must needs be saved. »

Significant comparisons (at choice) may be made with :

Psalm CXVII, 22; CXXVI, 1-2: « *Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum...* »; and, by way of contrast, Psalm CXXI, 3; Matthew XXIV, 2; John XI, 52; and Collect, Christ the King : « *familiae Gentium disgregatae* » cf. *2nd Advent* : I Peter II, 2-8; Ephesians I, 7-10 and especially II, 19-22

where there is mention of house, foundations, corner-stone (or key stone), of a building which is framed together and grows up into a holy temple in the Lord, of a building that Christians enter to form, through the Spirit, a dwelling place for God.

B. The Counter-proof by History. The sight of the modern world which, bit by bit, has drawn away from the corner-stone...

In the XVI Century with the Protestant Reform, the world *separated itself from the Church*, affirming nevertheless its desire to remain united to Jesus Christ. In the XVIII Century it separated itself from *Jesus Christ*, while still proclaiming its belief in the Supreme Being and in the goddess Reason. Finally in the XIX Century, the world took the last leap and turned away from *God* (cf. *A. Comte* and *J. Ferry* : « we want to organize humanity so that it can do without God » ; *K. Marx* : « religion, the opium of the people, » etc.). The result lies before our eyes : the « *splitting* » of the atom and of the nations, and (terrifying perspective), of the nations by the atom, unless there is a *return to the corner-stone...*

God cannot be reached save through *Jesus Christ*, and *Jesus Christ* cannot be reached save through the *Church* (cf. Sundays after Pentecost).

II. JESUS, THE CORNER-STONE OF THE CENTURIES.

A. The change of the year : 1960 is numbered in relation to the year 1 ! — of capital importance in History : « *Jesus Christ, yesterday and today and the same for ever* » (Hebrews XIII, 8 — cf. the Paschal Vigil).

— « *Yesterday* » : It was He they were waiting for throughout the whole wide world, ... (Péguy, *Eve*) ; Jesus Christ, towards Whom both Testaments turn... (Pascal, *Pensées*).

— « *Today* » : « *semper vivens, ...* » (Hebrews VII, 25).

— « *For ever* » : The heavens « shall perish : but thou shalt continue and they shall all grow old like a garment... But thou are the self same and thy years shall not fail. » (Christmas Day, *Epistle*). With Him, « a thousand years are as a day. » All the Church's prayers end with these words : « *qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum* ».

B. The corner-stone, and the safe anchorage of the centuries : Without Him history is meaningless ; but with Him, it is full of meaning and it is to Him that it is anchored. Here are a few phrases to be brought together and « pressed » for their full meaning :

— « *Plenitudo temporis* » (Galatians IV, 4). Before Him : the building up of the fulness, « the times of this ignorance » (Acts XVII, 30), when men « were serving under the elements of this

World » (Galatians IV, 3). After Him : overflowing fulness : « *The time is accomplished* » (Mark I, 15), the « *last times* ». « Full completion comes after that, when He places His kingship in the hands of God, His Father » (I Cor. XV, 25)...

— « *Plenitudo Christi* » (Ephesians IV, 13). The times of the world, like the times of any individual, are not *completed* unless they are re-established in relation to Christ (Ephesians I, 10), « the completion of Him who everywhere and in all things is complete » (I, 23). « We have all received something of His abundance » (John I, 16), and must strive to bring our fellow men to profit by it. Each one of the *years*, each one of the *days* that are granted to us, is of no value unless we make an effort to « reach perfect manhood, that maturity which is proportioned to the completed growth of Christ » (Ephesians IV, 13), « and so grow up in everything into a due proportion with Christ who is our head » (15), working so that his whole body may be organized and unified, and that we and everyone else may grow and be built up in charity (cf. 16).

Conclusion.

« *Salvation is not to be found elsewhere* » (Epistle). Jesus brings Life into the world, Life which is Himself (cf. John XIV, 6). Apart from Him, the world can do nothing but sink into the mire of death. In order to enter into this Life, we have but to build on this corner-stone and we shall become « stones that live and breathe, built on Him into a living fabric » (I Peter II, 2 sq.). Our time, *our years*, are given to us for that purpose alone : Whoever does not gather with Him, scatters...

Different nations have various picturesque ways of expressing their idea of time. The Anglo-Saxons talk about « *selling* » time (« Time is money »), the Swiss, about « *making* » it : the French say that they « *pass* » time, while the Italians « *kill* » time. A Christian, as such, does not sell time or pass it, and above all, does not kill it. On the contrary, he tries to make it *live* by *filling* it, that is, by bringing into it, a little more each day, « Him whose fulness is spread abroad in us. »

With each new year, we reach a further stage ; we add a new stone to this building which will never be completed here below. (Cf. « *proprior est nostra salus, ...* » *1st Advent*). We must make this year into a most valuable stone by trying, through the sacred mysteries, to come to a deeper knowledge of, and closer union with, « *Him in Whom we have believed* » (II Timothy I, 12).

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* * *

EPIPHANY

*Faith : the light and beginning of salvation.**Words of the Liturgy.*

There shines forth a light : « *stella* » (*Gospel, Collect, Communion, Alleluia ; Antiphon, Vespers*), « *illuminare...* (*Epistle, Gradual*). For all the nations : « *Ambulabant Gentes in lumine tuo* » (*Ep.*), « *de longe venient... afflues, ...* » (*Ep.*), « *Omnes reges, omnes gentes...* » (*Offertory*).

Salvation has already been presented to us in the form of light (*3rd, Advent*), and as offered to all nations (*2nd, Advent*). Today, it is presented to us as the consummation of our life in God : « *species contemplanda* » (*Coll.*), and in the form of a journey to be made by the light of faith : « *stella (ad) Unigenitum, fidem (ad) speciem contemplandum* » (*Collect*).

Doctrine to be brought out.

Faith is this light which leads to Jesus, « *the Prince of our salvation* » ; it is, moreover, for each one of us, the beginning of salvation.

I. FAITH IS LIGHT.

A. For the Magi : The star attracted their attention (the starter !) Faith alone made them set out (their engine !), as, in the past, *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, who set out without knowing where his journey would take him » (*Hebrews XI, 8*). The light of faith remained with him all the way even when the external sign disappeared : « *Lumen requirent lumine* » (*Hymn*)...

B. And for us, too, « God is light » (*I John I, 5*), « light inaccessible » (*I Timothy VI, 16*). Jesus brings this light to men, screening its brilliance to make it accessible to their eyes : « *The*

radiance of the Father's splendour » (Christmas Day, *Epistle*). « There is one who enlightens every soul born into this world ; he was the true light. He... was in the world » (John I, 9, 10). « *Lumen de lumine* » (*Credo*), etc.

Faith is the light of God, adapted to the capacity and needs of man on his journey to God. It is the light which leads man to *Baptism*, plunging him into the life-giving death of Our Saviour. (The candidates for Baptism used to be called : « *Those who are going into the light* »). It is a light which must grow ever brighter (Ephesians I, 13. — Cf. Sexagesima and 13th after Pentecost : *Collect*). By its light we are brought on our way to the Saviour who leads to the clear vision « *Lumen (requirimus) lumine* »...

II. ... AND THE BEGINNING OF SALVATION.

A. For the Magi. By their faith they were led to the « *Author of our salvation* » (Hebrews II, 10), to Him Whom St. Paul was to call « *the Author of Life* » (Acts III, 15. — Cf. *Easter Sequence* : « *Dux Vitae...* »). The Magi were already following Our Lord from their very first step on the way to Bethlehem and therefore, they did not « walk in darkness but possessed the light which is light » (John VIII, 12)...

B. Similarly for us. Throughout His Gospel, Our Lord has made known to us that salvation has come in His Person and is offered to anyone who is willing to receive Him through faith (cf. John III, 15 ; V, 37 sq. ; VI, 40 ; etc.).

We are more fortunate than either the Magi or Abraham : we do not set off without knowing where our journey will take us, but, through faith, we cling closely to Him Who « *gives eternal salvation* to those who, through Him, make their way to God » (Hebrews VII, 25). It is through faith that we journey on with « our eyes fixed on Jesus, who now sits on the right hand of God's throne » (Hebrews XII, 2). Our faith increases our hope and is « the anchorage of our souls. Sure and immovable, it reaches the inner sanctuary beyond the veil, which Jesus Christ, our escort, has entered already » (VI, 19).

It is through our *faith* that we recognize this same Jesus in the swaddling bands of the *sacraments* in which His redemptive Incarnation is prolonged. They are called « *sacraments of faith* » because faith leads us to them and they act only through faith (the faith of the Church in the case of the baptism of *infants*). So we understand why Our Lord, before speaking of the subject of His flesh

being the bread of life, first of all requires that it should be approached *through faith*.

« This is the will of Him Who sent Me, that all those who *believe* in the Son when they see Him should enjoy eternal life... Believe Me when I tell you this ; the man who has faith in Me enjoys eternal life. » (John VI, 40, 47).

The Council of Trent : « Fides est humane salutis initium fundamentum et radix omnis justificationis. » (D. 801).

St. Thomas : « The first union of the soul with God is made by faith. »

In this way, « *through the Church*, » is realized the eternal plan which God conceived in Christ Jesus, Our Lord and which « gives us all confidence, bids us come forward, emboldened by *our faith* in Christ » (Ephesians III, 12). « *Ex fide* » (the first stage in salvation), « *usque ad contemplandam speciem celsitudinis* » (the final stage).

Conclusion.

What has been foreseen is now realized : « *In eum Gentes sperabunt* » (2nd, Advent). On this day, Life has become a conqueror : « *Ambulabunt Gentes in lumine tuo... Filii tui de longe venient...* » (Epistle). This light which the Church will carry all over the world, is the light of faith : « *Euntes docete omnes Gentes... Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit, salvus erit.* » Thus, faith transmitted by the Church, « fills » our time (cf. Holy Name of Jesus) and carries us along towards the vision which will be the fulness of salvation, of light and of *Life*.

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Catechetical Pedagogy of the Mentally Deficient Children

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FOREWORD²

The Catechesis of Handicapped and Exceptional Children.

The problem of the catechesis of handicapped and maladjusted children is by no means a small one.

We may, indeed, consider as handicapped or maladjusted, every child so physically, psychologically or socially conditioned as to require exceptional adaptations of environment and education.

It is customary to classify more or less arbitrarily « handicapped and maladjusted » children in the following categories :

1. *Physically defective children* : tuberculous, motor-defective (paralysed, crippled), etc.

2. *Sensorially defective children* : blind, deaf and dumb, partially seeing, hard of hearing, etc. ;

3. *Psycho-motor defective children* : unable to move steadily or suffering from difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, etc. ;

4. *Psychically defective children* : two main categories : on the one hand, the intellectually defective (or mentally deficient), and children showing emotional disturbances on the other.

5. *Socially maladjusted children* : many categories such as children deprived of normal family environment, « displaced » children (refugees, migrants), mixed races (in certain cases), and finally, delinquents.

1. See biographical note in *Lumen Vitae*, XIV (1959), 3. — Address : 18, rue Blaise Desgoffes, Paris (VI^e), FRANCE.

2. These pages and the following articles are the fruit of reflexions made together by a team discussing their efforts and the results obtained. We think we shall be doing a service by making them accessible in English, after publishing them in the review *Vérité et Vie* (Strasbourg, 1954-1958) and in the book : *Pédagogie catéchétique des enfants arriérés*, Paris, Ed. Fleurus, 1959.

All together, all these handicapped children constitute a very considerable proportion of the child population... more than a quarter. So much so that in a country such as France, we reach the very high figure of over a million among school-age children (8-14 years) alone ; and about three million, counting the whole of the « child » group, that is, from birth to 16 years of age. It should be noted that this proportion is the same, by and large, in other so-called civilized countries. What is to be said, then, of countries where social distress and the results of wars are widespread ?

There is, besides, the whole problem of the catechesis of handicapped adults.



Study groups.

In 1954, a « Sub-Committee for the handicapped » was founded in Paris, within the *National Commission on Religious Instruction*. Several study groups were then set up under the aegis of this Sub-Committee to attempt to clarify the various aspects of the problem :

1. *Study group on the catechesis of the physically handicapped* : this circle took up again the work of the section of the Catholic Committee for the sick and crippled and, with the help of specialists, set to work on a threefold task :

— To draw up a test of religious knowledge on the Marie Fargues model, intended to examine the children's knowledge when they first enter a special school and detect the omissions. The religious education of these handicapped children has, in fact, more often than not, been nil or extremely haphazard and this makes it very difficult, not to say useless, to include them in an ordinary class for religious teaching.

— To set up an enquiry about the state of organization of religious education in health establishments and colonies throughout the French territory.

— To draw up a form of minimum syllabus of religious knowledge for a physically handicapped child. This syllabus provides for a year's work in four cycles, revising each quarter the essentials of Revelation.

2. *The study group on the catechesis of the mentally defective* : This circle applied itself to the study of the teaching of the Sacraments to mentally defectives and this led on to the studying in the function of symbolism and, especially, the symbols of gesture. The

same circle composed a handbook intended for the clergy and parish catechists trying to cope with the more or less numerous children « who are unable to follow the catechism classes. »¹ How are they to be discovered, classified, dealt with?

Finally, it is at present studying the conditions in which drawing may be used in the religious training of mentally deficient children.

3. *Study group on the catechesis of maladjusted and delinquents.* (These two categories of children, though they cannot be really classed together are, for the time being, under consideration by the one team) : in this case, too, a booklet has been prepared for the use of priests who, at short notice may find themselves appointed as chaplains of an Observation Centre or Re-education Centre which this particular study circle would like to see set up as soon as possible.

The problem of awakening and training a moral sense in these young people, in whom the sense of guilt is sometimes non-existent, sometimes morbid, has received much attention on the part of the priests, nuns, specialist educators and the doctor who make up this study circle. An enquiry is being made into the emotional reactions of these children to certain points of catechesis.

4. *Study groups for the catechesis of sensorially defective children.* A group for deaf and hard of hearing children begins to study the problem of symbolization in the catechesis of these children.

5. *A study group dealing with the catechesis of physically handicapped adults* (« long-term patients » in sanatoriums and hospitals for chronic invalids). This circle has conducted two interesting enquiries into the teaching of certain aspects of dogma to the sick.

6. *A study circle on religious instruction establishments for the socially maladjusted.*

This is under consideration.

The articles which follow have been, in part, composed in cooperation with the study group for the catechesis of the mentally defective.

The catechesis of mentally defective children.

The problem of the religious training of mentally defective children is not simply — as one may believe — a problem for « special » schools. All the enquiries that have been undertaken and

1. Cfr the brochure : « Au Catéchisme; Que faire pour les enfants qui ne suivent pas? » (Paris, Ed. Fleurus, 1959).

all established statistics go to show that mentally deficient children of various degrees, and notably, the higher-grade feeble-minded who, all the same, are really defective, are to be found in practically all our schools, all our parish catechism classes and still worse, in all our orphanages, homes for sick children and similar institutions. It is obviously a difficult matter to distinguish them from those children who are just retarded, but this diagnosis is none the less necessary. Equally necessary is the use of appropriate methods of religious education. It is therefore essential that all educators, no matter what their field of work, study this problem and these methods.¹

For some years now we have been following up a number of experiments in education and religious training for mentally retarded children : one of our experimental field is a catechism class conducted in a secular environment at a residential school under the Public Assistance authorities ; another is a catechism class carried on in a small home for dejective children with much more of a family atmosphere about it and with a definitely Christian background ; yet a third, is an interparochial catechism class which began in October 1956 in Paris and where, every Thursday there are gathered together from different parishes children whose lack of intelligence would render them incapable of following the ordinary classes, or even separate classes, given in their parishes by non-specialist teachers. They are, therefore, on the whole, of very low-grade intelligence (I.Q. 30-60), but at least, they are able to speak. Moreover, we have profited by experiments carried out in all kinds of situations as they have been reported to us by correspondence or at meetings — with specialist teachers. Finally, we are in a position to check up regularly on the religious instruction classes for medium defective (I.Q. 60-75) or slightly defective children (I.Q. 75-90) — either in institutions or in parishes.

In spite of these relatively numerous and varied basis or references, it is none the less true that the methods and especially their application, are liable to vary considerably according to the

1. According to the enquiry carried out in 1944 "with the assistance of a large number of teachers and career advisory officers, with the purpose of discovering the proportion of school age children in France showing a degree of intellectual deficiency requiring special methods of education about 30 % of the pupils of eleven to eleven and a half years old were found to have difficulty in keeping up with their class while 5 % were incapable of following at all." Cfr : « Le niveau intellectuel des enfants d'âge scolaire », Travaux et Documents de l'Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.

children's intellectual level and the circumstances in which they are placed, as well as the framework of one's activities and the recruitment of catechists. The suggestions we are going to make in these pages therefore are not to be imitated slavishly but, on the contrary, to be adapted to the various social settings and other circumstances of one's work. Neither do we consider that they should be discarded « en bloc » and systematically if it should appear impossible to carry them out as they stand. The essential, as always, is to keep to the spirit — if not to the letter. All the same, at the moment of handing over to the public this little book on the catechesis of mentally deficient children, let us recall the famous remark of Madame Montessori : *« Any attempt at applying it (this method) made by someone who has not grasped or does not altogether approve of the underlying idea, invariably results in a crude and harmful caricature of this system. »*

BASIC ORIENTATIONS

Who are those concerned ?

This is the first question to be asked and one that requires careful elucidation. Only too often educators who apply to us speak of defective children, « mentally backward, » or « children who though not idiots are, well mentally deficient » so many vague expressions which exclude both the possibility and the right to lay down any definite scheme of pedagogy.

It is of the utmost importance to distinguish very clearly between a mentally defective child in the strict sense of the word¹ and one who is merely « retarded. » To apply to a retarded child methods based on those we apply to mentally deficient children, would indeed be to throw things out of gear pedagogically with results that might be extremely serious. The most recent and reliable authors do, in fact, stress the fundamental difference (not one merely of degree) that exists between a mentally defective child and one who is just retarded. The « retarded » child may be one who has missed schooling for various reasons (connected with family, society or health...) or one who has not grasped very well what he has been taught by reason of some sensory handicap (unsuspected partial deafness or defective vision) or merely one who has de-

1. The true word would be "oligophrenic" e.g. "mentally deficient" or defective. But we must also remember that the vocabulary is constantly changing in this field.

veloped some emotional conflict within his family or at school... etc.

Retardation due to all such causes could be remedied more or less easily through special, supplementary classes with methods suited to normal children ; these children being of normal, sometimes even superior intelligence. The religious training given to these « retarded » children must take into special account their lacking in general education (say in reading or writing) and the causes of this delay (poor physical health, sensory disturbances ; in certain cases, character maladjustment).¹

To apply to such children methods suited to mentally defective children would be, we must repeat, a serious mistake... except, of course, in the points that such methods have in common with all authentic active pedagogy.

It can even happen that it is not only a question of schooling deficiency, but of delayed intellectual development. Here we are faced with something apparently analogous with true mental deficiency : but the cases are not the same for the child who although retarded in his development, will one day, though later than others, become a « normal » being.

In the case of the mentally deficient in the full sense of the word, his intellectual deficiency is so fundamental, that he will never reach a normal level of intelligence. It is not a matter of degree, for there can be mental defectives whose defect is slight, who, though almost normal, are yet really educationally sub-normal, while others are sub-normal to a very notable degree. Mentally deficient children may or may not show physical signs of defectiveness, signs that are more or less easily recognizable — microcephaly, for example — but they may also appear with interested and « intelligent » expressions. Hence the value of intelligence tests. It is easy to make fun of them but they are, at present, the most reliable method of forming a diagnosis. It is true, they must be administered by one who is really competent, their results may not be absolutely exact and one needs to take other things into account as well.

Mentally defective children are usually sent to special schools or if not, then drafted into « special classes » where these exist : it is most important not to send to such classes children who are simply retarded in their scholastic achievements.

1. It should also be taken into consideration that the level of religious education and even of religious instruction in the case of these children does not always correspond to their general standard in school attainments.

Then again, the various degrees of mental deficiency should be taken seriously into account. It is most desirable that anyone who wishes to take charge of mentally defective children should know what a « mental age » is ; to what, exactly the famous I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient) corresponds and the suitable correctives to be applied in intelligence tests. In our case, as we have said, in the settings with which we are best acquainted, we come across the most widely divergent degrees — from children close to normal (I.Q. 90 and over) down to very sub-normal children (I.Q. below 30). Methods must vary considerably according to the cases. There is no single type of mental defective : there are, so to speak, as many degrees and types as there are different mentally defective children.

*First know the child.*¹

It is therefore indispensable for catechists to have clear, even if elementary, notions about the mentally defectives in general. In addition they must get to know the children in their charge very thoroughly.

For this reason, if the catechist of mentally deficient children works in a parish catechism class, we feel that he should have some contact with the families of the children and, through them, with the doctor or the psychologist who examined the child. If there has been no such examination, the catechist or at least, whoever is responsible for the catechism classes, could perhaps, encourage the parents to have such an examination made.¹ If the catechist works in an institution, he will try to obtain all necessary informations from the staff in charge of the children. The matter is obviously simplified when the catechist is actually a member of the Medico-pedagogic Institute and has received the necessary training to be able to make this examination himself.²

A file-card — always confidential — could be drawn up for each child and thus provide information on his psychological standard (mental and emotional) together with some indications in the neurological order (for example, if the child is epileptic, subject to fits, to absences or to character disturbances, etc. Is the child lethargic, in need of a little shaking up or, on the other hand, over-excitable, to be continually calmed down ?)

1. Cfr the brochure : « Au catéchisme. Que faire pour les enfants qui ne suivent pas? » (Paris, Ed. Fleurus, 1959).

2. In, for instance, a school for specialist educators. Some of these schools provide courses in catechetical pedagogy and send out their students on teaching practice in religious education to mentally deficient children.

However, the details thus noted should not dispense the catechist from observing the child personally and considering carefully whatever he notices.

At the same time, esteem the child.

We may perhaps, surprise our readers by writing « *esteem* » rather than « *love*. » Esteem, to our mind, will lead to true love, or rather, it is already true love. There exists in fact, an indiscreet and harmful love of the defective child, which consists in « *fussing* » over him as over a « *poor little thing* » whom one cares for out of compassion. Now, the deficient child requires quite a different quality of love. He asks for love based on esteem. He has the right to it.

A Christian worthy of the name who goes to the defective child, gives himself to this child as to a « *person* » of « *unique and irreplaceable* » value, in some ways of infinite value ; one with inalienable rights, including, first and foremost, the right to an education and to a religious education.

Therefore, in regard to the educationally sub-normal child, any attitude of paternal « *superiority* » must be banished, still more, any joking (even among the catechists) and all disdain, even veiled.

We must add that, contrary to the opinion formulated by certain authors, such children have often a feeling of inferiority, even an « *inferiority complex* » which paralyzes them. Therefore, they always need to be encouraged and often to be praised, and that, *with conviction* and not « *on principle*. » The defective child, sometimes extraordinarily intuitive, feels quite clearly the falsity of a complement that is a trifle exaggerated and does not come from his catechist's heart.

We should avoid all that might appear to be treating these children as babies : a childish tone of voice for instance, songs for tiny tots or stories that are too naive. The deficient child will feel this devaluation, for it must be noted that his global maturity often exceeds the level of his academic intelligence : a fourteen year-old girl with a mental age of 7 is at the same time both less and more « *intelligent* » than a normal seven-year-old girl. She must not then, be treated like a child of 7 but like a girl of 14 with an I.Q. of 50 — quite another matter.

Realize clearly (and teach them) what is essential.

« *Teaching religion to mentally deficient children is something precious ; it helps in thinking out one's Christianity anew* » : this

is the opinion of some two hundred student teachers whom we have watched passing through our training schools in the last eight years. It has often been said that the catechism, wrongly termed « traditional » has the defect of putting everything on the same plane : the chapter on the existence of God and that on schismatics... Our defective children need to know that there is a God Who loves them... they could very well live and die without knowing the meaning of the word « schismatic. » And even if they knew the definition of the word they might still not grasp its true meaning.

Therefore, starting with the revealed truth and the child's potentialities, we have carefully studied together to find out what, above all, they ought to know, and still more, how to bring them to make it a part of their lives. We have condensed the Gospel message into what seemed to us its essentials and we have taken plenty of time to get our catechumens to grasp it little by little, and then, again very gradually, to live it. Below are a few of the basic ideas which, it seemed to us, most of these children could assimilate :

The world, which is beautiful and good, has been given to us by Someone Who loves us very much. He is God Our Father. He Who has taught us this, is His Son, Jesus, « the most beautiful of the sons of men » and He too is God. He has taught us to love Our Father in Heaven by praying to Him and by loving one another as He loves us. To love like this is not easy ; that is why Jesus has given us His Spirit of Love and His own life. (Make known to them the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist : Christian initiation).

— In spite of this, we can still not love and be wicked by not loving on purpose. This is a sin which God will forgive — if we are determined to try and love Him better and love our companions better, too.

— Jesus has suffered so that all the sins of men should be forgiven. The Church is the house of God Our Father where we are happy as we pray to Him all together. Jesus is our Good Shepherd Who knows us by name and is always with us. Our Lady Mary, His Mother is also our dear mother whom we love and who loves us.

These are a few of the great themes of our religious training, themes which we must repeat, constitute a « vital minimum, » for it must be quite understood that to those who are only slightly deficient, we can, and should, reveal more. How then are we to get our children to know these things and to live them ?

First of all by living them ourselves.

*The catechist's attitude is all important :
It is the method above all methods.*

Children such as these are, as we have said, often over-sensitive and extraordinarily intuitive. It is impossible to « play a part » with them. They immediately see through an attitude which is just put on. The catechist of mentally defective children therefore, more than any other kind of catechist, must be convinced of this and be very much on his guard for fear, that at any moment anything in his way of behaving or of living should strike a false note.

The catechist should therefore have unwearied patience and gentleness with the children. Be happy and show evenness of temper, even great kindness. He must manifest true piety expressed in every genuflection, each sign of the Cross, but above all, in his general attitude of respect and love for Our Lord. He must also display, thoughtful charity in regard to other catechists. Nothing reminiscent of the « supervisor » : for anything of the sort makes a deep impression on the children and they immediately form unfortunate analogies.

All this obviously requires that the catechists should lead an interior life, let us say it, « a life of prayer. » They do, in fact usually find this out after a short time ; they also find that, with the grace of God it is made easier by contact with these children.

After that, and only after that, may we begin to talk about adapting methods.

Help them to live in a christian setting.

The catechist's attitude will help, as we can guess, in creating the right setting. Educationally sub-normal children need, more than any others, to « like their religious lessons. » In their case feelings are more potent than reason and no truth will go home if it is received in a strained atmosphere. Conversely, we have already achieved something worthwhile if our children keep happy and pleasing memories of the religious lessons and of their catechists, for they are inevitably associated with their ideas of God and religion.

It is better with such children to forego, temporarily at least, the teaching of a truth, even an essential one, or the recital of some prayer, rather than provoke a psychological association between the truth or the prayer on the one hand and, on the other, too tiresome an effort or too painful a measure of discipline which might induce or even condition a reflex of disgust.

That does not mean to say that we make use of the easy methods of propaganda with our children. Quite the contrary, we have done away with giving good marks, sweets and pictures to which, by long tradition, they had grown accustomed. Still, the children just love their catechism lessons.

However, we have never inflicted any punishment in any way and have restricted remonstrances to the minimum by keeping them to natural sanctions and positive remarks : we have given encouragement to do better rather than reproaches for wrong committed.

These *encouragements* have sufficed little by little to transform the atmosphere of the catechism class. From a noisy bear garden where the law of the strongest — or the least defective — reigned, we have developed step by step into a community of children who are very fond of one another and help one another and where a relatively peaceful atmosphere reigns. What was, moreover, a mere agglomeration of apathetic children all shut in on themselves has grown into a little society that is alive and fraternal.

It has not been easy and it is far from being perfect. It has taken all the *unaffected and true tenderness* of the catechists, their patience that has never wearied nor wavered, their « psychiatric » attitude consisting in a capacity not to be disturbed in face of a torrent of filthy language suddenly following — or preceding — the most frantic embraces. And finally, their presence of mind by which they have turned to good purpose the innumerable occasions that working in common round a little table or a visit to the Chapel provides, for getting the children used to an attitude of reciprocal consideration and even of kindly forethought for the least favoured among them.

More difficult still has been *their initiation into the sense of the sacred* especially in the setting of a certain chapel full of memories of inveterate habits of indescribable disorder and complete lack of control. Music, sacred or profane, but always good music and beautiful, has been wonderfully helpful : though even more helpful, in this as in all the rest, has been the attitude of the catechists themselves, visibly and deeply penetrated with the sense of God.

One last point on which we should have wished to be able to report greater progress : *the material setting* in which the religious instruction takes place. There have been forty of us cooped up in a sacristy dating from the time of Saint Vincent de Paul, and which seems never to have been repainted or repaired since. But we used to decorate our walls and tables as best we could with crepe paper, coloured sashes and flowers. We tried especially to get a little order to reign among the pious junk of catafalques and chasuble stands.

Order, together with a minimum of beauty, is indeed essential in educating mentally defective children. They are more sensitive to these things than other children even though they cannot give expression to it.

Encourage freedom of expression.

Self-expression answers a *fundamental need* of every child and especially of the mentally defective. Moreover, in the measure in which we furnish the child with opportunity to express himself, we shall develop his personality and provide him with the chance to give of himself. Now this is genuine and fundamental religious education — a true approach to God. In fine, this freedom of expression gives us the invaluable opportunity of getting to know the child, of coming into contact with him and so of helping him.

Many catechists would be tempted to think it wasteful to let the child spend time painting a house, drawing flowers or making a crude model of someone. No doubt, we have not to stop at that, but from our point of view, it does constitute a starting point which is all but necessary and a stage to which we devote several periods at the beginning of each year. The child gains confidence during that time while we, on our part, learn to observe him, to meet him on his own ground, with his own instruments ; to speak his language composed of sensible symbols, and get him to like us while we learn to love him.

In the course of the year too, free expression is always a possibility within certain limits in the work by table groups or in « working parties. »

So as to encourage the child to express himself, we should put into his hands material that is easy to handle — attractive material and plenty of it. Banish black lead pencils, rubbers and rulers... and even coloured crayons. It is better to use beautiful water colours, large surfaces of paper (packing paper will do) on which they can paint with their fingers or with lovely big brushes. We must not be afraid of giving them generous allowances of potters clay : they prefer it to plasticine which is stiffer and so, harder to work, while models in it cannot possibly be kept. Finally, one should not forget the resources of bodily expression : we shall come back to this later.

*In teaching properly so-called ;
reduce the size of the group,
or rather, treat each one personally.*

We have found by experience that it is extremely difficult when dealing with educationally subnormal children, to get over to them

by means of oral lessons given collectively, anything really worthwhile that they can assimilate. At the very outside one can hold their attention for a *matter of minutes* and hope to be understood by some of them only if one speaks *very slowly, very distinctly, with expressive gestures and using only words of the utmost simplicity*. We can put questions to our audience to stimulate some reaction, but we must never forget that the answers of a few of the livelier or better endowed sort in no way prove that the whole group has understood.

Film strips are, apparently at least, more successful. We know how alluring the catechist may find them and how dangerous they can be for him if they lead him into laziness or, at least, into liking the easy way out. Our children who, at first, used to clamour with hound and horn for the « cinema, » now protest if it goes on longer than ten minutes at the risk of cutting short « the work at the tables. » We consider that an achievement.

In reality, it is *round the tables*, more exactly in very small groups, that *the best work is accomplished*, work that goes deeper and is best suited to each one's needs. The groups are arranged according to mental ages and types of children rather than chronological ages. There are three or four children in each group, sometimes only two, never more than five. The catechists could not cope with more. We must not forget that a mentally deficient child is frequently either unstable, requiring constant support and attention or apathetic and then he needs to be stimulated. Then too, everything has to be adapted to the individual and it has to be borne in mind that the capacity for co-operativeness follows the mental age and therefore appears very late or perhaps not at all in the case of the mentally defective.

We are not closing our eyes to the difficulty of recruiting catechists and giving them their specialized training — a matter we shall come back to later. Every year we have to spend long hours getting a team together again and training it. The solution of collective teaching — always inadequate — is simply a last resource in the case of mentally defective children. In any case, it could only be one aspect of their catechesis and needs to be completed by personal religious education.

Awaken gradually the social sense.

Reducing the size of the group and giving personal training does not at all imply shutting the child up within himself. On the contrary, we have to make sure of awakening in him a social sense

beginning with the little group in the catechism class which is just big enough for him.

For this reason the collective part of the lesson must also be carefully prepared so as really to enlist the children's activity and lead them on to give expression to their reactions before one another and in regard to one another, to share the same feelings and express themselves together in prayer. We shall explain, in the next chapter, how one might go about attaining these ends.

It must, however, be always remembered that the social sense develops only gradually in any child and that the mentally defective child comes to it later still. He cannot then, be expected to show certain attitudes in his relations with others which would quite rightly be expected in the normal child or in the adult.

Still more does this hold good in respect of initiation into and readiness to accept the yet more extensive communities of parish and diocese, the Church and finally, the whole communion of saints. To what extent the « educationally sub-normal » child may be able to grasp or even sense the dimensions of these communities, what they stand for as realities and their exigencies, is difficult to say and still more to foresee.

It is true, though, that many a truth will become present, if not intelligible to him in what we call the « symbolical » way.

*The symbol as a way of access
and a means of expression.*

A symbol is a sensible sign of a non-sensible reality with which it has a more or less profound analogical relation. To the psycho-analytical school goes the credit for reminding us that we symbolize spontaneously and that we sometimes feel the very striking impression of symbols without, however, making them explicit.

Thus we noticed that mentally defective children were deeply impressed by colour, pictures, music and symbolic gestures without being capable of analysing their content and that, inversely, these children were endowed with an extraordinary aptitude for symbolizing on their own through these various means.

We think therefore that it is desirable to *utilize symbols to the full* in the education of defective children — and to help them to express themselves symbolically in various ways.

As *the liturgy* is particularly rich in symbols, it is expedient to draw largely upon it. All the same, this must be done in an altogether progressive and really active fashion — a thing which too often is overlooked.

Bodily expression.

Our first experiment was made outside the Chapel and consisted in a descriptive *dance* performed by one of the catechists to express the attitude of Our Lady before the Crib. The children were enthralled and we felt convinced that some of them had grasped the underlying meaning of this dance though it had been limited to very pure and very stylized movements.

We passed on from that to a liturgical, or rather, if one may so speak, to a « *pre-liturgical* » initiation.

There is no point, in fact, in teaching a child to genuflect if he has not first of all understood that with his body he can express an interior attitude. Now, we think that the mentally defective will grasp this only if he sees the catechists doing it and if he gradually comes to put it into practice himself.

Besides there is nothing to indicate that the genuflexion will be the most suitable attitude for immediate expression of the child's adoration. Defective children are often unable to maintain their balance and so, instead of genuflecting the child may all but topple over. A profound bow will seem easier to them and will often be more expressive.

The *gesture of offering* will at first be made with something in their hands : the drawing or model they have just finished ; and then with empty hands while the priest himself offers the same objects... but care must be taken to avoid anything verging on the ridiculous : defective children are particularly sensitive to anything of the sort differing in this from very young children. We can remember a Paschal para-liturgy with little lighted lamps : it almost became a fiasco because the candles burned low and caused not only burns... but hilarity. The same applies to processions which, contrary to what one might imagine, are one of the most difficult undertakings to carry out satisfactorily whether hymns are sung or not. The « slow and recollected processional march » has been accomplished only in exceptional circumstances such as on First Communion days, or in very small groups or, lastly, by sending the children forward one by one from the back of the Chapel... in any case, after long preparation. But, under these conditions it is true that it may have an educational value.

We do not make use of « mime » for every time we have tried it, we have stirred up unfavourable reactions. But we have utilized « *bodily expression* » which is quite another thing. When the catechists have *interpreted* a scene from the Gospel, their movements have always been a kind of descriptive dance performed in every

case to a very slow rhythm and good music. The Gospel text, transcribed in a very simple but not « childish » style, was first of all read very solemnly from the lectern by a priest wearing an alb ; it had been the subject of deep meditation and prayer by those taking part and they had rehearsed it together very seriously. Whenever this kind of dance has been performed, the music has continued for a little while afterwards so that the children could contemplate in an atmosphere conducive to solemn prayer.

We have never yet allowed the children to express the Gospel in a corporal way for fear of detracting from its sacred character : but to make up, we have had them take part in *prayer in common* in which we repeated some of the essential attitudes suggested by the dance. We have also made use of corporal expression with them in connection with moral training starting from the actions and themes of daily life.¹

All these rules and precautions might appear superfluous. We have become convinced, however, of their extreme importance if we are not to spoil this wonderful means of initiation into the sacred and into prayer.

Music.

It is the same with musical expression. That mentally defective children like music has been a well known fact for a long time though it seems to us untrue to say that they prefer the highly stressed rhythm of jazz or « light » music. To begin at the extreme however with Church music — gregorian chant for instance — may provoke some hilarity : « It's the Mass ! ». We think therefore it is generally better to begin with beautiful classical music, slow, serious and sustained (cf. Handel's Largo) ; then go on to other more complex pieces such as concertos of the Brandeburger Concerto's type, and finally, reach the psalms of Gelineau or Deiss (which usually meet with great success), religious polyphonic music (e.g. Handel's Hallelujah Chorus) and even gregorian chant.

Care must be taken that the audition should not last too long (e.g. not more than a 45 t./p./m. There must always be *perfect silence* — generally favoured by the semi-darkness — and especially must *the catechists be silent and perfectly still* — a thing which is often more difficult to obtain than the silence and immobility of the children. If a child fidgets or talks, there should be no hesitation in stopping the music for a moment or in sending the child to play outside though this should not appear to be a punish-

1. Cfr Chapter V : *On Moral Training.*

ment but simply so as not to disturb the others or deprive them of their enjoyment. Neither should the music be spoilt by having it played while the children are engaged on work round their tables or in some unimportant activity. Lastly, after the audition it is often good to have a brief moment of deep silence.

The children themselves will often be able to take part in the musical performance by playing on the pipe or by singing. Defective children love singing though they tend to spoil the songs. These should be sung perfectly in their presence and *a very good standard of performance should be exacted* from them on their part. If they should become nervously irritable they can be taught a song and given time to « *digest* » it — then it can be polished up next time. This principle which is applicable to all children, is still truer in regard to defectives with, as we all know, their extraordinary memories but slowness in assimilation.

This can be taken further and the children given the chance of creating music and songs. Contrary to the opinion of many authors, the mentally defective is capable of creating. He shows this clearly by his paintings, models and his wealth of bodily expression.

Painting and modelling.

We have already given some indications concerning painting and modelling as means of expression on the child's part. The catechist will also make use of them in symbolic work for his religious teaching, particularly in the production of posters.

Each of our « lessons » is illustrated by a *very large-sized poster* — a real panel which, moreover, the children can help to make — bearing in big, easily readable letters a very simple phrase, one which is very easy to memorize, often one gleaned from a hymn e.g. « *Oh ! how good it is, Lord, within Thy house !* » or « *Glory be to God for the flowers* » or again, « *Love one another as God loves us.* » This phrase is accompanied by pictorial illustrations cut, maybe, out of magazines e.g. « *Vie Catholique Illustrée* » or « *Panorama Chrétien*, »¹ or designed by the catechists themselves in a very stylized and striking way. Up to the present we have not made any practical use of religious pictures properly so-called save on very rare occasions, for fear of finding them more of a hindrance than a help. Indeed, the defective child is much more inclined than others to identify a person with his picture or image and displays

1. However, more "profane" magazines may also help to enlarge the catechist's collection of photographs.

a disconcerting animism as regards pictorial representations. We found this with our children who took the statues in Chapel for living beings or thought the gilded head of an angel which unluckily adorned the altar was « little Jesus » putting his head out of the tabernacle door !

A FEW WARNINGS

Avoid treating them as infants.

We have just mentioned « little Jesus »... It took us no less than three years to get our children to stop telling us that « Little Jesus created the world » and give up making us models of « little Jesus » on the Cross — for years had they been « little Jesused » so to speak, and to such an extent, in their religious training ! We must not forget that defective children have a tendency to develop fixations in their emotional evolution and even to retrogress. It is better to show them Jesus growing up, becoming a man, than to keep them back in an infantile attitude by always talking to them about a baby Jesus.

Aim at doing nothing but what is sacred.

We have discussed this many a time but are more and more convinced that the *religious education* of deficient children needs to be very *deeply rooted in the natural and the concrete*, and grow strongly within their daily life.

We therefore, often have to start off from the « natural » plane and rise from that to the supernatural and divine.

We had, for instance, to tell our children all about how a baby grew and eventually developed into a child of their age, and then into a man, all just in order to explain to them that Jesus had not always been « little Jesus. » We began by admiring a fountain or a waterfall and from that went on to the waters of Baptism : we took an ordinary meal along with them and from the ordinary table passed on to the table of an altar, the Holy Eucharist, etc. Corn was brought to the catechism class and germinated so that our children might grasp something of the parable of the Sower and understand how we have to receive the word of Our Father Who is in Heaven.

This slow progress is *indispensable* for whoever wants his training to bear fruit. There is no question though, about its being less laborious where there is close collaboration between the catechist and

the usual school teaching, easier still if they are one and the same person.

Beware of the learning by heart method.

You can get on much quicker with mentally deficient children by getting them to learn the catechism by heart. These children, indeed, often have exceptionally good memories. When the Bishop questions the children before Confirmation he will be pleased — on condition that he keeps to the text. The simplest question as to meaning will very quickly disillusion him by proving to him that hardly anything has been understood, still less assimilated or put into practice and the grave mistakes have been made. Fine progress, indeed !

This does not mean that all learning by heart must be avoided even with defective children. There are certain *simple formulas* which they will remember with pleasure and really assimilate beginning with the words of songs if these are chosen carefully. The formula adorning the mural panel at each « lesson » could also be memorized.

The less defective, we must not forget, will be able to read and write and we must in no way overlook these means. Moreover, these children, even those who cannot read or write, often like to have words written down and they will copy these with, here again, a sure sense of the value of this highly developed symbol — the word or the phrase.

« Write your name down for me » the children will often say to us — even those who cannot even tell one letter from another. But they keep our written names as treasures for, to them, these written words are as something of ourselves that they are keeping. In the same way they respect the name of God when they have written it, and it may be for them a way towards the spiritualization and a certain form of worship.

And of the danger of routine.

In the articles which are to follow we shall speak of the reception of the Sacraments. It will then suffice to say, at this point, that we consider that a large number of mentally defective children are capable of a valid reception of the sacraments. Never have we had reason to regret admitting a defective child to Baptism, Holy Communion and even Confirmation. We have often been surprised even, by the all but wonderful and visible effect of their participation in sacramental life. This is especially the case in their reception of

the Sacrament of Penance from which they appear to draw real profit, profit which may be noted in their behaviour after confession, as regards those around them or in the attitude at prayer.

All the same there must be no pressing the children to frequent the sacraments for this might develop into a mere mechanical process. Some defectives would willingly go to Confession every day with a little encouragement or even merely if they were allowed to. Routine is easy for the defective even more than for the Christian who is considered normal... and we all know that that is saying a great deal.

That is why we think *we should vary* — and that, frequently, the course of our « lessons » (the collective part first, individual part afterwards — or the other way round... introduction, or omission, of a film, etc.). We also change one syllabus every year by preparing it in the way that we shall show further on, although *it always follows* more or less closely *the unfolding of the liturgical year*.

CONCLUSION

Team work.

This first article will end on this note : we are a team welded together in a marvellous way each year although it is almost completely changed by the coming and going of student teachers. We have created a tradition of great friendship in the service of defective childhood and we work as a team.

This team has now increased in size. There are other teams being formed to deal with the religious education of defective children in other corner of France or of the world. For this reason we should be most desirous of having accounts of what is being done elsewhere, other opinions, perhaps, on this matter, and in advance, we look forward to them gladly.

May « the poor have the Gospel preached to them ! »

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
BOOK REVIEWS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

RELIGIOUS SOCIOLOGY

BIROU, Alain. — *Sociologie et religion*. Paris, Éditions Ouvrières, Économie et Humanisme, 1959, 226 p. — This is a really valuable book which can be recommended to all those who reflect on the problems raised by religious sociology. Can Sociology really grasp the reality of Religion ? Teach us anything about it ? What is its sphere of investigation and the ground on which it can venture without overstepping its methods and reducing the religious reality ? Does it not risk dissolving the specificity of the religious phenomenon in its anxiety to explain ? These are so many questions which sociologists and thinkers ask themselves today with more subtlety than ever. The author, in an original and new essay, answers these problems while respecting on the one hand religions in general and Christianity in particular, and, on the other, recognizing a specific object and a scientific value in a sociological analysis of religious phenomena.

Sociology seeks to measure religion ; but this urge to measure and explain everything itself necessitates a standard of measure which is none other than the religious man ; it is to him that the author refers first of all while studying, from the Christian point of view, the Church and the Ecclesial life. But, in addition, it was necessary to examine what sociology can teach us about man within the society in order to determine his sphere of validity, to prevent certain sociologists reducing religion to their own explanatory methods.

Having in this way established the sphere to which each reality belongs, religious and social, and the types of knowledge of the corresponding disciplines, it became possible to define the status of religious sociology and to set forth the laws of its relations, at the confines not as yet very clearly determined where Sociology and Religion must meet in a dialogue and not confront each other in useless polemics.

It is difficult to say what is most admirable in this work : the lucidity and precision of thought scrutinizing the object in view and the methodological limitations of religious sociology and of the comparative science of religions, or the vastness of the research which, maintaining itself on the confines of various sciences, endeavours to synthesize the results while avoiding all confusion of plans.

DE LESTAPIS, Stanislas, S.J. — *La limitation des naissances*. Paris, Spes, Bibliothèque de la recherche sociale, 1959, 304 p. — Professor of

Religious Sociology at the « Institut d'Études Sociales de l'Institut Catholique e Paris, » Rev. Father de Lestapis is well-known for his contribution to the work of research on the evolution of ideas on the family in France. In his book, the author's final aim is the justification of the Church's position regarding the problem of the limitation of births ; therefore this is a work of moral and social doctrine. However, this justification rests on a thorough sociological investigation of the problem, which gives the work a very positive aspect and makes for its interest and value.

The problem dealt with is of burning actuality, for the limitation of births is emerging from the human conscience as a new « right of man and of the citizen. » Each day an increasing number of human beings seem to ratify this new right with enthusiasm. Catholics, however, remain puzzled in the face of this complex problem and of the countless values bound up in this question. It is to enlighten these Catholics, and with them many others who hesitate, that the author has written these pages.

A first section establishes the balance of the various religious and ideological positions relative to the planing of births. In this way the following are reviewed : malthusianism, marxism, the reformed churches, Islamism, Hinduism. A second section studies the consequences which a nation encounters in the long run through the legalizing of contraception. These pages which are among the most original in the book, explore a relatively little known field. The third section presents the Catholic Church's point of view, starting from the human values which the Church intends above all to safeguard. These values interest not only individual families, but also the governments responsible for the evolution of civilizations. The control or regulation of births is the key-chapter of the book. Finally, the fourth section attacks the most difficult part of the problem ; the demographic upsurge of the under-developed countries, the « world's hunger. » What solution can a Catholic put forward ? What politics should he formulate ?

This work is the first attempt at synthesis from the Catholic point of view.

VIALATOUX, Joseph. — *Le peuplement humain. Tome II : Doctrine et théories et signification humaine du mariage.* Paris, Éditions Ouvrières, 1959, 720 p. — The first tome of this work on human population appeared in 1957, with the sub-title of *facts and questions*. It was devoted primarily to the observation, in contemporary history, of facts which compel more and more the attention, not only of learned specialists in demography, economy, sociology and psychology, but of the political States of the entire world and of the O.N.U. The author assembles these facts under two main headings, on the one hand, a rapid and unprecedented world demographic increase and, on the other, a western demographic revolution consisting in the appearance within our « advanced » civilization of a control of births within marriage itself.

To these facts and to the questions they raise which have always pre-occupied human thought, numerous doctrines and theories have tried to answer, filling the history of ideas.

Tome II which has just been published is devoted to a profound study of the doctrines and theories which the human mind has thought out when confronted with these human questions. More precisely, those doctrines and theories which have specially attracted the philosophical attention of the author. His aim has been on the one hand to present them as faithfully and clearly as possible, and on the other to propound in their connection, the reflections which they seem to call for.

A great part of the work studies in 21 chapters the doctrines and theories concerning quantitative demography. The last part studies, in three chapters, the doctrines and theories of qualitative demography and of demography axiology.

The findings of this work endeavour to reveal through these various efforts the perspectives which open out on the human significance of marriage.

The author had already published in the « Éditions ouvrières, » in 1953, a book entitled « **Signification humaine du travail.** » A philosophy of human population seemed necessary to enlighten and complete a philosophy of work.

A. DRÈZE, S.J.

BOOK REVIEWS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

TEXTBOOKS OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION

MURRAY, Sister Jane Marie, O.P. and GIESE, Vincent. — **On the Way to God.** Notre Dame (Indiana), Fides Publishers, 1959, 186 p., \$ 1.35. — The religious instruction of Catholics attending State Secondary Schools is usually given for only about one hour per week. To fulfil this requirement the «Confraternity of Christian Doctrine» publishes a new series of 4 textbooks based on Sister Jane Marie's **Christian Life Series**. The first volume is therefore an adaptation of the more advanced textbook **Going to God**. It comprises seven «units» of 3 to 7 chapters. From the fourth unit the lessons follow the plan of the Liturgical Year; therefore according to the liturgical seasons and together with them, grace, the sacraments, virtues and the commandments, are explained. In these expositions the Bible has a large part. The illustrations, reproducing Old Masters or liturgical scenes is a great help to the teaching given. This textbook corresponds to the progress of religious pedagogy in catechetics. Possibly, the book cover will come in for some criticism. A paperbound, duplicated notebook entitled : **Teacher's Manual on the Way to God** gives the professor directives and references for the preparation of lessons, a calendar in which to insert the text of the liturgical year, a commentary of the illustrations, etc. But above all, he will derive great help from the syntheses which summarize each chapter, to place in evidence the kerygmatic content.

The Light of the World. Glasgow, Collins Clear - Type Press, 160 pages, 5/-. — Catechism textbook for classes of 3 to 4 years-old at the primary school, following the lines of **The Scottish Catechism of Christian Doctrine**. The lessons with headlines in red are for the 3rd grade, and those with headlines in blue for the 4th grade. Each of them comprises a brief, concrete explanation of the doctrine, the corresponding catechism questions, exercises and really significant coloured pictures. The lesson on the commandments comes last, therefore after the teaching on God, the Fall, Christ, Grace, the Sacraments. The book is made very attractive by its pictures and typographic presentation.

McGRATH, Fergal, S.J. — **Life in Christ. I. Life Given and Lost. Life Won Back. - II. Life Possessed : The Sources of Life.** Dublin, Gill and

Son Ltd., 1958, 200 - 94 - 152 p., 12/6. — This religious textbook, intended for boys and girls of 13 to 16 years attending secondary schools is based on « A Catechism of Catholic Doctrine » approved by the Irish Episcopate. It follows the traditional scheme : dogma, morality, sacraments. The presentation of doctrine is mainly notional and abstract ; however, a tendency to a more concrete form of teaching is manifest in certain pages which have recourse to the Bible, to liturgy and to examples taken from everyday life. The religious synthesis presented to students is very good indeed. A great many illustrations reproducing Old Masters will not only initiate students in religious art, but will give them a better understanding of our faith.

Our Holy Faith. - III. **God's Truths Help Us to Live.** - VI. **Our Faith God's Great Gift.** Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1959, 350 - 280 p. — We review here two volumes, already available, of the new series for Primary Schools entitled : **Our Holy Faith.** Under the guidance of Mgr. Clarence Elwell, it has been compiled, tested and reviewed for several years by Sisters of various Congregations. These two volumes, intended respectively for pupils of the 3rd and 6th grades are based, from the doctrinal point of view, on the first half of Numbers 1 and 2 of the « Revised Baltimore Catechism » and deal with the corresponding themes. The method used is that of « psychological units. » Each unit is subdivided into parts comprising : a concrete exposé of the doctrine with illustrations and a summary which includes : lists of words ; things to remember ; things to do or discuss. The corresponding Catechism Class with questions and answers, followed by other questions make up the unit. The text, illustrations and typography itself point to a serious doctrinal formation and a considerable pedagogical experience in the authors of this new textbook. Their work brings to the teaching of religion in primary schools the most recent acquisitions of catechetical pedagogy. The corresponding Master's Books have the same qualities : 90 page notebooks, magnificently paper-bound and printed, set-out very clearly and methodically. They are entitled : **Teacher's Manual for God's Truths Help us Live**, and **Teacher's Manual for Our Faith : God's Great Gift.**

Complementary Books.

BAUER, E.C. — **A Graphicism of Christian Doctrine.** St. Louis, The Queen's Work, 1958, 64 p. — Synoptic tables and graphs covering the whole content of the Catechism. They are easy to read and logically planned. Masters and Pupils will find them most useful. Spaces are left blank for explanatory notes.

DRINKWATER, F.H. — **Teaching the Catechism. An Aid Book for Teachers.** London, Burns and Oates, 1958, 166 p., 10/6 d. net. — We cannot fail to draw attention to the 8th edition of this textbook for func-

tioning teachers and for the formation of future educators and catechists. Well-known in England, it is in current use in several dioceses in that country.

FISCHER, Balthasar. — **Questions the Catechism Didn't Answer.** Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1958, 114 p. — This is an excellent translation from the original German « Was Nicht in Katechismus Stand » published by the Paulinus Editions, Treves. Traditional catechisms do not as a rule enlarge — to say the least of it — on the aspects of liturgical life and in particular on the details of Christian worship. We find here fifty or so instructions, short, clear and sufficiently learned, the chief aim of which is to nourish Christian piety. They mainly deal with the following subjects: The House of God, the sacred signs or liturgical gestures, feastdays and liturgical times, the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments.¹

GOLDBRUNNER, Josef. — **Teaching the Catholic Catechism with the Religion Workbook. I. God and our Redemption.** New York, Herder and Herder, 1959, 108 pages. — English translation of a very much appreciated German book, for the teaching of the catechism (See Book Reviews *Lumen Vitae* XI (1956), p. 541.)

HEEG, Aloysius, J., S.J. — **The Illustrated Catechism.** St. Louis (Missouri), The Queen's Work, 1958, 128 p., \$ 0.70. — This attractive and suggestive presentation of the « Revised Baltimore Catechism N° 1 » will certainly be a great favourite among children. Each picture gives, in an appropriate as well as original manner, the teaching for which it is intended. This form of illustration is, generally speaking, both enlightening and moving. Through it, the child realizes better the importance of the catechism in its own life. The brightness of the colouring recalls the Italian style.

EDUCATORS AND EDUCATIVE MILIEUX

POWER, Edward. — **A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States.** Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1958, 383 p., \$ 7.00. — Much has been written on the history of the Catholic Church in the United States, but the book under review constitutes the first essay of a complete history of Catholic Higher Education in this country. It is of indisputable interest. However, this interest will reside more in the study of the religious, political, sociological, economic and educative factors which led to the foundation and eventually to the re-organization of these Catholic Institutions of Higher Education (« colleges » universities), rather than in the dates beginning in 1744 with foundations, and 1890 to 1920 with re-organizations. Because the

1. Review by J. BAYART, S.J., Kurseong, India.

author has succeeded in revealing these and showing the evolution of methods and programmes, he has enriched the pedagogical science in general and religious pedagogy in particular. An appendix presents briefly the history of the 265 « colleges » founded between 1786 and 1957.

RITAMARY, Sister, C.H.M. — **Spiritual and Intellectual Elements in the Formation of Sisters.** — **Planning for the Formation of Sisters.** New York, Fordham University Press, 1957, 1958, 262-314 p., \$ 3.00. — The « Sister Formation Movement » organizes each year since 1954 several regional study sessions for the formation of nuns. The reports, discussions and resolutions of the 1954-1955 sessions have been published under the title : **The Mind of the Church in the Formation of Sisters.** The present accounts concern the sessions of the subsequent school-years. In 1955-1956 the theme was : The integration of spiritual and intellectual elements in the formation of Nuns, which implies the primacy of the spiritual, the need for an intellectual formation and, above all, the necessity of integrating the life of holiness and the life of science within the person (teacher, nurse, etc.). The 1956-1957 sessions were devoted to looking into the future : how should the formation of teaching nuns, nursing sisters and welfare workers be adapted to the new requirements of the apostolate ? The account given reproduces mainly the findings which concern teaching sisters. This work, the result of a great mutual effort of reflection and documentation could not be overestimated and should be widely used.

SISTERS' INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY. — **The Role of Authority in the Adaptation of the Religious Community for the Apostolate.** Notre Dame (Indiana), University of Notre Dame Press, 1959, 316 p., \$ 4.00. — For an adaptation of the religious community in view of the apostolate. Reports and debates of the sixth session of the Institute, the theme of which is of the highest importance since it endeavours to determine the responsibilities of all the persons and administrative actions. The rôle of authority was investigated under its sociological, ascetical and canonical aspects. The present and future perspectives of various types of apostolate were expounded : hospitals, missions, schools. These pages, which the talent of Rev. Father Joseph Haley, C.S.C., renders so interesting, point to an intense effort of collaboration in the domain of the religious life, but also in the sphere of religious education, as is proved by the report of Sr. Annette Walters, C.S.J.

AIM AND HIGHWAYS OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION

Bible.

CHARLIER, Celestin, Dom. — **The Christian Approach to the Bible.** Glasgow, Sands and Co. Ltd., 1958, 300 p., 18/- net. — The English public will be thankful at last to have at its disposition the masterly

book published in French under the title : « **La lecture chrétienne de la Bible** » and translated into several languages. It is a popularized treatise of all the acquired knowledge of modern exegesis, and will serve to integrate the Bible into the intellectual life of the Christian and to its use in his spiritual life, in a spirit of fidelity to the Church. This work fills a gap in the Catholic biblical literature of English-speaking countries.

HEINISCH, Paul. — **Theology of the Old Testament and History of the Old Testament**. Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1957, 476-458 p., \$ 1.95. — These two books, translated from the German, complete each other in the author's mind : while the theology exposes what some men called by God have learnt to believe and require to be done, the history shows what the religious situation really was. In his theology, Heinisch has allowed himself to be guided by the actual plan of Catholic theology. His history comprises eight sections ranging from primitive history to Grecian and Roman times. English biblical literature is thus enriched with a reliable textbook which can be consulted with great profit.

HOLE, William. — **The Life of Jesus of Nazareth**. London, Eyre and Spottiswode, 1956, 30 s. net. — Magnificent album of 80 full-page coloured illustrations, taking up again the series of the life of Our Lord. The text placed opposite reproduces the Gospel story, either literally or with amplifications. This book is of undoubted artistic value, the characters evolving in a background as realistic as possible place this album far ahead of the usual productions of the kind.

PETERSHAM, Maud and Miska. — **Moses - Ruth**. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1958, 32 p., \$ 2.00. — The authors have specialized in the publication of magnificent illustrated books for little boys and girls. But those inspired by the Bible, as are these two, are particularly successful. Not only are the stories adapted to the intelligence of the child, but the illustrations are very fine and the typographic presentation in large print greatly helps the little ones to read.

The Shorter Knox Bible. The Old Testament. London, Burns and Oates, 1958, 418 p. — The wellknown translation of the Bible in English by Mgr Knox will be more widely read and distributed among the faithful thanks to this abridged version. It is not only easy to handle but it is compiled with the greatest care from extracts which place in evidence the unity of the biblical story and give a complete idea of the whole. The general plan is as follows : History, Prayer and Piety, Prophecy.

VAWTER, Bruce, C.M. — **A Path Through Genesis**. London, Sheed and Ward, 1957, 308 p., 18/- net. — The author's purpose is twofold : first, to help to understand the Old Testament as the preparation of the New; second, to show that the Book of Genesis is not at all in contradiction

with true science. After a very fully developed introduction along these lines, the 15 chapters of the work each comprise, in uniform characters, several extracts from the Bible with their commentary which bring to the reader the recent findings of exegesis. The commentaries are clear, instructive and interesting. Reading through them gives one a better understanding of the Scriptures and a greater appreciation of their immense importance in the work of salvation.

WIKENHAUSER, Alfred. — *New Testament Introduction*. Freiburg, Herder and Herder, 1958, 579 p. DM. 29.50. — This translation has been taken from the second edition of the German book entitled : *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, a learned treatise on the evolution of the canon of the writings of the New Testament. The present state of the criticism of the text, its history, the problems of Protestant versus Catholic exegesis, are given in detail. After the general expositions of the two first parts, this textbook gives a very thorough schematic study of each book of the New Testament in the third part : summary of the contents, circumstances which led to the composition, destination, authenticity, etc. It has been written of this book that it will probably retain for a long time the confidence of professors teaching the Introduction to the Scriptures.

LITURGY AND LIFE OF PRAYER

1. *Liturgy*.

BOUYER, Louis. — *Life and Liturgy*. London, Sheed and Ward, 1956, 284 p., 18/- net. — Summary of the lessons given at the Notre Dame University (Indiana) to explain the liturgical movement. This volume demonstrates an original and critical manner of looking on this movement (*Lumen Vitae* XIII (1958), p. 350).

CUNLIFF, C.R.A. — *English in the Liturgy*. London, Burns and Oates, 1956, 154 p. — This selection of articles, to which well-known English liturgical experts have contributed, considers under various aspects : theological, canonical, liturgical, literary, musical and pastoral, the important problem of introducing the vernacular into the liturgy in place of Latin (administration of the sacraments, divine office, Mass). Each author freely gives his opinion and supports it with historical documents and considerations which constitute a real initiation into the liturgical science and show what great interest these problems hold in England.

DANIÉLOU, Jean, S.J. — *The Bible and the Liturgy*. Notre Dame (Indiana), University of Notre Dame Press, 1956, 372 p., \$ 5.25. — We would recall here that this work is the second of the learned series published by the University of Notre Dame, under the title « Liturgical Studies. » It examines carefully the symbolism of the three principal

sacraments : Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist, and then that of the week and the liturgical year. It gives remarkable documentation which contributes greatly to extending the study of the sacraments.

HOWELL, Clifford, S.J. — **Preparing for Easter.** Collegeville (Minn.), The Liturgical Press, 1957, 160 p., \$ 0.65. — This is one of the best textbooks to prepare for the Paschal celebrations and enable them to be followed profitably and with interest. We have already reviewed it in *Lumen Vitae* (vol. XI, p. 535), but would draw attention to this new edition enlarged and reviewed in conformity with the most recent pontifical decrees.

JUNGMAN, Josef, S.J. — **Public Worship, A Survey.** Collegeville (Minnesota), The Liturgical Press, 1957, 250 p., \$ 3.50. — The Rev. Cl. Howell, S.J., well known for his liturgical works, translates under this title Fathr Jungmann's book : *Der Gottesdienst der Kirche*, which presents the substance of the liturgical courses given over the last thirty years to theological students. If each question is not developed as the author himself would have wished, all the liturgical questions are here recalled in their main lines, restored to their historical origins and situated within the conspectus of liturgical science.

MC MAHON, Rt. Rev. Mgr John T. — **Pray the Mass.** London, Burns and Oates, 1958, 66 p., 2/-. — Mass book for children of 6-12 years. The first part is a brief and animated explanation of the ceremonies and prayers of the Mass which the author divides up into 32 « steps, » an original way of fixing the attention and interest of children. In a second part, the child learns through pictures and texts to recognize the sacred vessels, vestments, etc. A supplement entitled « Suggestions for the Teaching on the Mass » ends this excellent textbook.

O'SHEA, William. — **The Meaning of the Holy Week.** Collegeville (Minn.), The Liturgical Press, 1958, 136 p. — The historical evolution of Holy Week, the theology of the Paschal Mystery, the commentary of the pontifical decree on the reform of Holy Week, introduce us in these pages to the liturgy of each of the days of this great week. The author explains the texts and the ceremonies of the liturgy with their history, ending with pastoral suggestions for which he draws inspiration from the more recent publications on this subject.

Our Parish Prays and Sing. Collegeville (Minn.), The Liturgical Press, 1959, 160 p., \$ 0.30. — Hardly had the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites appeared in September 1958, than the staff of St. John's Abbey hastened to publish this parish handbook for Sung Masses, Dialogue Masses, Requiems and Hymns (97). The translation of the Ordinary of the Mass is entirely new and based on the most recent endeavours. The content, directives and typographic presentation are arranged so as to

give the maximum facility for the participation of the faithful in the offices.

The Parish Mass Book. London, Challoner Publications Ltd. — Small missals for assistance at Low Masses, Dialogue Masses and Sung Masses. The faithful are given instruction in those parts of the Mass proper to them and in the manner of assisting. The Latin texts are faced with English translations.

ROMB, Anselm. — **Understanding Chant as An Expression of the Age which gave it to us.** Collegeville (Minn.), The Liturgical Press, 1957, 24 p., \$ 0.10. — A very instructive booklet on the meaning and history of Church Music and Gregorian Chant, together with an English bibliography.

2. *Life of Prayer.*

EMILY JOSEPH, Sister, C.S.J. — **Reflecting on St. Joseph.** Paterson, St. Anthony Guild Press, 1959, 64 p., \$ 0.50. — This is a novena to St. Joseph inspired by directives of Father Lallemand S.J., who lived three centuries ago. Each day of the novena comprises four brief meditations, (which can be done anywhere, at home, in trams, or out walking....) on St. Joseph: his faithfulness to grace, his faithfulness to the interior life, his devotion to Our Lady, his devotion to the Holy Child. Even children can make this novena in its simpler form, and adults will draw therefrom many lessons.

GUAZZELLI, V. — **A Daily Thought.** London, Sands and Co. Ltd., 1958, 186 p., 7/6. — Richard Challoner, Bishop of the district of London in the 18th century, published a book entitled: *Meditations for Every Day of the Year*. These meditations, here reduced to about fifteen lines, will be a very great help for the faithful of our times, bringing them to think of God and speak to Him, for they will hear the voice of a soul turned towards its Creator and the supernatural world.

Feast Day Melodies. Grailville (Ohio), 1957, 104 p. — This collection of hymns for feast days and the liturgical times of the year, is the work of the Grail center established at Grailville. Altogether there are 88 hymns with their musical annotation. They condense, in their brevity, the essence of a feast or liturgical time usually by means of a few words from the Scripture.

MARY EVELYN, Sr. S.N.D. de N. — **Talks with Jesus.** Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony Guild Press, 1958. — The author had the excellent idea and also the talent for explaining to children as well as to parents and educators the manner of using this book, intended to make the **person** of Jesus known to children. Thus prepared, the young reader can apply

himself to these meditations on the various phases of the life of Our Saviour which each comprises the consideration of a picture, the request for a grace, the exposition of a mystery, a talk with Jesus ; the whole adapted to the intellectual capacity of the child, awakening his imagination and his spiritual curiosity.

MARY EUPHROSINE, Sister of Divine Providence. — **Talking with Jesus.** Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1958, 90 p., \$ 1.50. — A subject for meditation for each day of the school year, in a few lines, is the best way of initiating girls to mental prayer so that they get a habit of it for the rest of their lives. The author of this small handbook endeavours to make this experiment in a simple but very devotional way.

Mental Prayer. St. Louis (Missouri), The Queen's Work, 1958, 574 p. — Seculars who wish to give a quarter of an hour each day to mental prayer, will here find a book containing a meditation for each day of the year. These meditations, follow the Ignatian method and are classified according to series ; bearing on all the themes of Christian life and doctrine they are based on the Bible and on liturgy. Even Christians who know little about mental prayer can use them with great profit, the authors having been able to associate elevation of thought with simplicity of form and presentation.

NEWLAND, Mary Reed. — **The Year and Our Children.** New York, Kennedy and Sons, 1956, 328 p., \$ 3.95. — This book is intended for parents, in order to help them teach their children how and in what spirit Christian feasts should be celebrated. It is rich in doctrine, but from the pedagogical viewpoint in particular, it is now surpassed by other works of the kind. Nevertheless, many ideas, suggestions and anecdotes remain topical, and if only the presentation were improved, this book could be more easily used with great profit.

O'HALLORAN, Leo, C.S.S.R. — **Prayer Book for Men - Prayer Book for Women - Prayer Book for Boys - Prayer Book for Girls.** Dublin, Fallon Ltd., 1956 and 1957, 72, 112, 112 p., 2/6 d. — Small prayer-books attractively illustrated and bound. The main contents are the Mass prayers, preparations for the reception of the sacraments, prayers to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, Stations of the Cross, Novenas. Their small size makes them particularly practical when travelling and on holidays.

Christian Life.

1. Testimony of the Church.

BETZ, Eva. — **The Man Who Fought the Devil.** Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony Guild Press, 1958, 152 p., \$ 2.25. — Anecdotic narration of the

life of the Curé d'Ars, just the thing to edify and interest adolescents and even children. Sketches add lustre to the stories told in a lively way.

BURTON, Doris. — **Brave Wings**. London, Burns and Oates, 1957, 192 p., 12 s. 6 d. — These Christian characters who lived in the XIXth and XXth centuries, give fine examples of courage, self-denial and charity to the young. In a vivid style the author depicts Ozanam, Matt Talbot, Donald Garlaud, Marcel Callo, Father Rupert Mayer, Bishop Francis Ford, etc. Our epoch is not lacking in heroic Christians. It is up to the Christian educator to introduce them to his pupils.

CASSIDY, Joseph. — **Mexico, Land of Mary's Wonders**. Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony Guild Press, 1958, 208 p., \$ 4.00. — These pages reveal the splendours of the statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary venerated in Mexico, giving us their photographs and history. Each of these statues bears a name which deeply stirs the Christian Mexican soul. Taking his stand on ancient and modern literature, the author brings to life the often miraculous past of the twenty-eight sanctuaries in which the image of the Mother of God shines forth.

GARDINER, Harold, C., S.J. — **Edmund Campion, Hero of God's Underground**. London, Burns and Oates, 1957, 192 p., 16/6 net. — The adventures of those priests who lived in England and celebrated Mass clandestinely during the reign of Elizabeth at the time of the Reformation, remain a fascinating subject. This story of the hidden sacerdotal activity and martyrdom of the Jesuit Edmond Campion, disguised as a jeweller, will arouse the greatest interest among the young and at the same time give them a great lesson of faith and apostolic zeal.

HALLACK, Cecily and ANSON, Peter. — **These Made Peace**. Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony Guild Press, 1957, 288 p., \$ 3.50. — The message of peace which it was St. Francis' mission to transmit to the world, has inspired the title given to these 52 biographies of members of the Franciscan Third Order, composed with the greatest care for authenticity. These tertiaries belonged to very different social classes and lived in most varied circumstances. Their actions have not been without influencing the life and history of the Church.

HAMMON, Walter, O.F.M. — **The First Bonaventure Men**. St. Bonaventure, St. Bonaventure University, 1958, 250 p. — The story of the foundation and development of the St. Bonaventure University reveals the great work accomplished by Franciscans for the scientific and religious formation of American youths. At the same time it is a fine page of the history of the Church in the United States.

HARNEY, Martin, S.J. — **Brother and Sister Saints**. Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony Guild Press, 1957, 144 p., \$ 2.00. — The selections are very scarce which, like this one, gather together stories of fraternal love

between brothers, or brothers and sisters, which abound in the lives of saints. Martha, Mary and Lazarus of Bethany were the first examples. Throughout the history of the Church, in every part of the world, this example was followed. The author here presents some for our edification.

REYNOLDS, E.E. — **Three Cardinals**. London, Burns and Oates, 1958, 278 p., 25/-. — This history of the three cardinals who were the protagonists of the development of the Catholic Church in England during the later half of the XIXth century, is full of interest as well as of instruction. The biographical sketch allows the author to place in evidence the very characteristic personality of each one. But the account of their mutual relationship in which their ideas, sentiments and acts sometimes agreed and at other times were in opposition, gives the liveliest picture of the «second spring» of the Catholic Church in England. To adolescents and adults, this book presents a wonderful witness to the vitality and moral courage of the Church and of the priesthood.

2. *Directives of Christian Life.*

ADAM, August. — **The Primacy of Love**. Cork, The Mercier Press, 1957, 156 p., 5/-. — In publishing the translation of this rather ancient work, the Mercier Press places at the disposal of English-speaking educators a treatise proposing a doctrine, a pastorate and an education centred on charity. They will find here a great wealth of penetrating views and documentation on the instruction, education and preaching of chastity.

CAFFAREL, Henry. — **Marriage is Holy**. Chicago, Fides Publishers Association, 1957, 220 p., \$ 3.75. — This is a concomitant work which investigates competently the philosophical, psychological, social and religious aspects of marriage, under three main headings: Dignity and Profundity — Two in One Flesh — It is a Great Mystery. This synthesis thus gathers together the whole teaching around a dominant idea: the Holiness of Marriage.

KANAL, P.V. — **Mental Equipment for Married Life**. Delhi, Panchal Press, 1955, 129 p. — Book of conjugal morality, replete with examples and anecdotes, for it is entirely empirical. It analyses those elements which ensure the stability of matrimonial life (mutual confidence, respect, etc.), those which threaten it (jealousy, faithlessness, etc.) and suggests some excellent practical resolutions (always make excuses, congratulate the other, never make comparisons...) This book is full of practical wisdom and good sense, but it does not take one very far as it lacks a religious basis.¹

1. Review by J. BAYART, Kurseong, India.

MEYER, Wendelin, O.F.M. — *Living the Interior Life*. Cork, The Mercier Press, 1957, 190 p., 15/-. — A treatise of spirituality, written in German by the author under the title : *Wahres innerliches Leben*, and based on the two first books of the Imitation of Christ. It comprises numerous fairly brief and very concentrated chapters, classed under two main headings : Practical Directives for the Religious Life — Recommendations for the Spiritual Life. After each chapter a very precise form of examination of conscience reveals the soul to itself.

PERRIN, J.M., O.P. — *Christian Perfection and Married Life*. London, Blackfriars Publications, 1958, 6/6 d. — These pages eminently recall the essence of Christian perfection and show how marriage, lived as it should be, enables the two partners to achieve the perfection of charity in their lives. The faithful will greatly appreciate this concise but very high-minded teaching on the ideals of a life to which they give themselves entirely.

WHELAN, Basil, O.S.B. — *Happiness with God*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd., 1959, 150 p., 12/6 d. — A collection of conferences to nuns, which can equally be profitable to all truly Christian souls. The author really hits the target he had set for himself in his previous book : « *The Joy of Serving God*, » which shows religious practice under its aspects of joy, cheerfulness and peace in the service of God. This is also what catechesis does more and more.

3. *Apostolate and Missions*

The Lay Apostolate in India. Poona, De Nobili Publications, 1959, 88 p., 90nP. — The account given of a « camp study » organized by Jesuit theological students of Bandra (Bombay) from 15th to 24th May, 1958, on the subject of « *The Lay Apostolate* » is remarkable for the density of content, the clarity of the reports and debates, and the international bibliography. The aspects envisaged : doctrinal base, sociological analysis of the field of action, organizing principles, training of lay apostles, rôle of the priest, etc. give these studies a universal scope. After each account, a questionnaire and the findings of the debates bring into focus the problems and the solutions envisaged by the recorder. This could not have been better done if the desire had been to compile a textbook on the lay apostolate.

MACKEY, Ernest, S.J. — *Directing Boys and Students*. Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony Guild Press, 1957, 201 p. — The result of years of experience, this textbook is intended for the spiritual directors of adolescents. It is an adaptation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius brought down to young people's mentality. Not only through instructions and meditations, but also through observations and directives, directors will here find matter to ensure the fruitfulness of retreats and of personal apostolate among adolescents.

EWING, Franklin J., S.J. — **Christians Living in Mission Lands**. New York, Fordham University Press, 1959, 186 p., \$ 3.00. — The reports of the Fifth Annual Congress of «Mission Specialists» held at Fordham University in 1957, are here given in extenso and accompanied with bibliographical notes, and also with summaries of the debates which arose therefrom. Among others, some of the subjects studied were : the history of the formation of new Christians to the Christian life from apostolic times ; the sacramental life in Mission Lands ; liturgical and paraliturgical celebrations ; the influence of Christian life on civil society.... All these subjects are dealt with in a masterly way by the reporters. This book has an undoubted place in modern missionary literature.

4. *Christian Humanism*

KANAL, S.P. — **Dialogues on Indian Culture**. Delhi, Panchal Press, 1956, 92 p., RS 3.50. — The author introduces the main foundations of Hindu civilization and culture. He studies the different aims of life according to the traditional philosophy : enjoyment, possession, duty, salvation ; then the structure of Hindu society, marriage and family, education, economic life and property.

Altogether this is a traditional sketch, based on the classics (Dharmashastras), but intermingled with Christian influences and a few imports from alien sources and Marxism («Buddha, Christ and Karl Marx, who felt identified with the best interests of humanity, are still higher in their achievements of the best values of life,» p. 31). The author possesses a remarkable talent for exposition, he reveals clearly and simply the main principles.¹

PERPETUA, M., Sister, R.S.M. — **These Are Our Freedoms**. Chicago, Ginn and Company, 1959, 382 p. — The new edition of Vol.VII of the wellknown collection «Faith and Freedom» which is a resolutely Christian series adapted to American conditions, shows considerable improvement on previous editions in the illustrations, typography and binding. It has found a place in practically all the primary schools, where it cooperates to a great extent in the formation of the pupils as much from the religious as from the social point of view.

STUDIES ON THE CONTENT OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION

Synthesis.

HEINRICHS, Maurus, O.F.M. — **Theologia Fundamental** (Editio altera). Tokio, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1958, 554 p., \$ 3.00. — Under the title «Towards the Better Kerygmatic Formation of Missio-

1. Review by J. BAYART, Kurseong, India.

naries» Father Hofinger reviewed at length and with much deserved praise in *Lumen Vitae* (Vol. X, pp. 509-516) Fr. Heinrichs' theological textbook entitled «*Theses Dogmaticae.*» The subject of the special theology comprised three volumes, but the fundamental theology was lacking in this new edition. The author has taken time to study this more thoroughly, and the present book is the result of his work, thus making a complete whole.

HENRY, A.M., O.P. — *The Historical and Mystical Christ — Christ in His Sacraments*, vol. V and VI of the Coll. Theology Library, Chicago, Fides Publishers Association, 1958, 502-466 p., \$ 7.50-5.95. — These two volumes complete the English translation of the French work «*Initiation théologique,*» intended to place at the disposal of seminarists, and even more of nuns and layfolk, theological doctrine following the thomist thought. The authors deal successively with Christ, Mary, the Church, the return of Christ; then with the sacraments in general and in particular. Each part ends with interesting «*reflections and perspectives*» followed by an up-to-date bibliography. To this is added, at the back of the book a «*short theological lexicon*» explaining the principal technical terms, and three indices (scriptural references, proper names, analytical tables). This book is already wellknown and deserves the largest circulation in English speaking countries.

The Church.

FENTON, Joseph Clifford, Mgr. — *The Catholic Church and Salvation.* Glasgow, Sands and Co., Ltd., 1958, 190 p., 12/6 d. net. — The teachings of the ecclesiastical magisterium on the necessity of the Church to arrive at eternal salvation are formulated in a particularly definite way in eight pontifical documents ranging from Innocent to Pius XII. Mgr. Fenton reproduces and comments these documents in the first part of the book. In the second part he expounds very clearly the history and theology of this dogma from which present-day catechesis cannot fail to draw inspiration to deepen the idea of «*salvation,*» to which it so often refers.

PERRIN, J.M., O.P. — *The Church in My Life.* London, Blackfriars Publications, 1959, 128 p., 12/-. — At a time when the «*mystery of the Church*» takes an ever more important place in catechesis and the pastorate, the English translation of these pages, first written in French under the title «*L'Église dans ma vie*» comes at the right moment. The author of this book has really attained his end which was, not just to summarize the traditional teaching, but to bring to the fore certain points of guidance for Christian life.

VAN NOORT, C., Mgr. — *Christ's Church.* — Cork, The Mercier Press, 1958, 430 p., 30/-. — The second volume of this textbook of theology by Van Noort represents, as did the first, a great work of translation

and revision following the most recent decisions of the Church, the progress of exegesis and the other branches of positive theology. It comprises an apologetic section: The Church seen from outside; a dogmatic section: The Church seen from inside. Such a textbook in ordinary language is of the greatest help for the diffusion of the doctrine of the Church.

Grace.

CUTTAZ, F. — **Our Life of Grace.** Chicago, Fides Publishers Association, 1958, 328 p., \$ 6.95. — The original book in French is entitled « Le Juste, Notre Vie de Grâce, ses splendeurs, ses richesses. » In effect, all the questions concerning grace are here examined: its formal effects (participation in the divine nature, supernatural sonship), the effects which derive from it (the presence of God in the soul, infused virtues...), the effects which depend on man's co-operation (glorification of God, merits...). This systematic and abstract treatise will be extremely useful for all those occasions on which a point of doctrine in this particular sphere needs to be defined.

Morality.

HERRON, Matthew, T.O.R. — **The Binding Force of Civil Laws.** Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony Guild Press, 1958, 118 p. — Professors of religion will find in these pages all the necessary information for the day when, in their course on morality, they find themselves speaking of the obligation to submit to civil laws. They may have to be brief, but the historical and doctrinal exposés in this book on law in general, on civil society and its authority, on the theory of penal laws, etc., will enable them to give sound and definite teaching.

Booklets on Religious Culture.

Guild Pamphlets. Paterson (N.J.), St. Anthony's Guild, 1958, 24 p., \$ 0.10. — Alcoholism — Saint Lucy — Ten Commandments for Parents — When Teen-Agers Go Steady.

Queen's Work Pamphlets. St. Louis, Miss., The Queen's Work, 1958 and 1959, 24 p. each \$ 0.10. — Byzantine Rite Catholics — The First Joy-Heaven Lady Most Courteous — The Lesson of Lourdes — Mass for the Living — On Thinking Out Vocations to Four States of Life. — Parents and Vocations — Providence — So You're Making a Retreat! — Television — The Trinity and Mary.

The Constant Choice — Footlights to Cloister — Frequent Communion and the Eucharistic Fast — How to be a Christian in Business — Millions Need Her Help — Parents, Teen-agers, and Dating Patterns —

Principles of Sex Education — Too Late is Forever — Woman, Her Role in the Home, Church and Community. — Each year « Queen's Work » publishes new booklets to keep ever closer to actual life and orientate it towards God. They throw Christ's light on all aspects of individual, family, national and international life. The booklets enumerated here are those which appeared in 1958 and 1959. Adults will find therein a teaching which answers their preoccupations.

PEDAGOGY AND METHODOLOGY

COLLIER, K.G. — **The Social Purpose of Education.** London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959, 236 p., 21/-. — To answer the question : how should education be adapted to the economic, social and religious evolution in England ? the author, after having described this evolution, takes his stand on the given facts of sociology, psychology, morality and pedagogy. His work represents an original method of approaching and explaining these problems and their solutions, according to the most recent scientific progress. It is regrettable that so little place is accorded to religion as a positive factor of education.

FAERBER, Louis, S.M. — **Our Lady in Education.** Dayton, The Marian Library, 1958, 208 p. — On the occasion of the centenary of the Lourdes Apparitions, Dayton University organized a session of study from 11th to 18th June, 1958. The reports presented were intended to show clearly the role of Our Lady in Christian education, and discover ways and means of facilitating her influence in Catholic schools. Eighteen essays investigate this original and very topical theme, which has rarely been studied so carefully. This collection will serve as a basic book, fully documented and sound, for whoever wishes to study the place of the Virgin Mary in religious pedagogy.

FLAHERTY, J.L. — **A Study of the Effect of Operational Factors on Secondary School Instruction.** Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1952, 82 p. — In reply to certain wishes, we draw attention to this scientific investigation, already published in 1952, on the 24 factors which, in secondary teaching, limit the efficiency and output of educators, priests and religious of both sexes. It constitutes a basic work on the subject.

FULLER, Edmund. — **The Christian Idea of Education.** New Haven, Yale University Press, 1958, 266 p., \$ 4.00. — Published for the first time in May 1957, by 1958 this work was already in its 4th edition. It represents the viewpoint of educators, scientists, historians, novelists, theologians and philosophers on what education should be in a Christian civilization. Among the chapter titles we would cite : *Liberal Education and Christian Education ; The Person in Community ; The Liturgy and Christian Education ; Faith and Culture ; The Two Sources of Western*

Culture ; God Is the Teacher. Catholic and Protestant opinions confront each other in these pages which give much food for thought.

JANE MARIE MURRAY, Sr., O.P. — **The Christian Life : The Christian Formation of the Adolescent.** Chicago, Fides Publishers, 1957, 16 p. — This booklet explains clearly the philosophical and especially the psychological presuppositions, and the planning of the textbook **The Christian Life**. For the religion teacher it summarizes the prescribed directives for the religious education of adolescents.

MESCAL, John. — **Religion in the Irish System of Education.** Dublin, Clonmore and Reynolds, Ltd., 1957, 254 p., 24/- net. — It would be difficult to find a better documented work on the relationship between Church and State in the Irish sphere of education. The author describes in full the principles and history of this Irish system of education, together with its achievements and advantages. He stresses even more its religious trend by comparing it to the systems adopted in Holland, in Quebec and in Scotland.

Proceedings of the Tenth National Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Paterson (N.Y.), Confraternity Publications, 1958, 388 p. — During this congress all the problems concerning religious instruction in general and the training of catechists of the C.C.D., were investigated, as is shown by the 15 headings under which are grouped the many reports : Confraternity Organization — Teachers and Teaching Methods — Place of the Catechism and Scripture in Religious Formation — Religious Vacation Schools — Audio-Visual Religious Education — Religious Education of the High School Student — etc. If we could quote here the designation of each report, the importance of this great session of the C.C.D. would become clearly evident. A profound study of present-day catechesis must refer to these reports which manifest a deeply supernatural and dynamic religious pedagogy.

SLOYAN, Gerard. — **Shaping the Christian Message.** New York, The Macmillan Company, 1958, 328 p., \$ 5.50. — Thirteen priests and prominent Catholic educators here analyse the concrete problems and applications of religious education in accordance with the following general plan : Historical perspectives : Christian antiquity (G. Sloyan), middle-ages (A. Jungmann), England in Penal Days (J. Crichton), The St. Sulpice method (G. Colomb), modern tendencies (P. Ranwez). — Theological and scientific considerations : pedagogy of the faith (F. Cou-dreau), primary religious education (A. Boyer), religious instruction in colleges (G. Weigel, A. Hardou). Practical considerations : formation of catechists (P. Hofinger), the work of Newman (J. Maguire), terminology (F. Drinkwater), confirmation at the age of reason (G. Delcuve). Each theme is in itself a gold-mine in which can be found all the actual trends of thought on religious education, thus giving the reader a rapid insight into this domain.

RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

BYRNE, John. — **A Study of Student Problems in Catholic Mens Colleges.** Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1957, 116 p. — Student problems in Catholic « colleges » for boys which have had little attention up to now, are the subject of this thesis presented to the « Catholic University of America. » It is a scientific research on the problems met by students regarding school, vocation, morality, finances, family and the adaptation of the personality. Together with the problems this investigation finds out to whom the pupils ordinarily go to solve them. Finally, some practical conclusions are given to those responsible for education. The aim of this work, to give an exact appreciation of the real condition of students in order to guide them aright, is fully attained.

HOEY, Francis Ann, Sr. S.N.D. of N. — **A Comparative Study of the Problems and Guidance Resources of Catholic College Women.** Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1957, 220 p., \$ 2.50. — The aim of this thesis, as of the previous one, is to find out, through the most modern forms of research, what are the problems of « college » pupils, in this case Catholic « colleges » for girls. 1603 colleges took part in the research. Here too the investigators endeavoured to find out who were the counsellors these young girls more often turned to. The conclusions drawn from these facts were elicited for the benefit of educators. Statistics and commentaries help greatly to clarify the subject.

LOCKWOOD, E. de, S.J., DE SOUZA, Valentine, S.J. and HEREDERO, J.M., S.J. — **Survey. Moral Trends Among Indian Students.** Poona, De Nobili College, 1958, 96 p. — The gaps in modern education in the sphere of morality brought about this research on the moral tendencies of students in India. The authors got in touch with students of all religions who follow courses of Ethics or Natural Moral Philosophy, and those who do not ; they separated the replies given by students of Catholic institutions. The questionnaire, the replies, amounts per cent, and graphs, form the framework of each theme : prayer, God, sin, the hereafter, moral applications, etc. In conclusion, a generally higher statistical level of morals and religious observance is found among students who follow the course of Morality. It remains that these courses should be increased and improved. To meet the wishes of students, the second part of this thick booklet deals with « Student Counseling » or the personal direction of students. The whole represents a scientific and pedagogical work of great value, very much appreciated by various reviews, particularly the « Christ au Monde » which gives it a long article (vol. IV, N° 3).

RELIGIOUS SOCIOLOGY

GIBBONS, William, S.J. — **Basic Ecclesiastical Statistics for Latin America 1958.** Maryknoll (N.Y.), World Horizon Reports, 1958, 72 p.,
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\$ 0.75. — This is the 24th of a series of essays on subjects of actual world interest, presented as a basis of information for courses in sociology, history and religion. All the themes dealt with are treated scientifically and thoroughly investigated. In view of the rapid evolution of Latin American countries and the lack of religious and sacerdotal vocations in these regions, concrete information on their religious tendencies was needed. We find this in the present work in which statistics on the population, the clergy, Catholics, and references to original sources constitute an important documentation.

STARK, Werner. — **Social Theory and Christian Thought.** London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1958, 250 p., 25/-. — According to this author, all great religious thinkers have developed a social doctrine by the side of their theological one. Thus the pages of this book put forward the social doctrine of saint Augustin, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Newman. On the other hand, the second part of the book proves that the social systems of sociologists, economists and philosophers such as Smith, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Bergson, Scheler and Meineke, rest on religious foundations of which, very often, their authors are oblivious. Thus this original diptych, profoundly studied, clearly shows the points of contact between even the most recent social theories and Christian thought.

Louis MEILHAC, *Brussels.*

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